

ENCOURAGING GROWTH AND AN OUTREACH MINDSET IN ADULT
SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES THROUGH IMPLEMENTING A VISITATION,
PHONE CONTACT AND PRAYER PLAN

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To my wife Laura, whose sacrifices
have made this work possible,
and to my parents and step-parents
who have encouraged me and believed in me
no matter what I set out to accomplish

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Abstract

This thesis project sought to increase the number of Sunday School visitors and members by implementing a visitation, phone contact, and prayer plan with the leaders and students of the adult Sunday School classes of Cathedral of the Cross in Birmingham, Alabama. It was anticipated that an outgrowth of this outreach implementation plan would be a greater outreach mindset in the adult Sunday School teachers.

This thesis explores: the need for an outreach focus and implementation plan in the Sunday School ministry of Cathedral of the Cross, Scriptural motivations and presuppositions for using Sunday School for outreach, a survey of relevant literature, the plan for change that was put into motion, and the summary and evaluation of the results as the plan was implemented.

While the project did not produce the numerical growth expected, this thesis proposes that progress has been made in achieving the needed outreach mindset on which future outreach methods can be built.

Chapter One

The Problem and Its Setting: Sunday School Evaluation and Potential

Many have overstated the decline of Sunday School in America. Some are of the opinion that Sunday School on this side of the Atlantic will follow the trend of British Sunday School, which historian Doreen Rosman states has “entered a period of terminal decline” since the 1950s.¹ In America, according a 2004 Barna Group survey, Sunday School is still pervasive, as 95% of Protestant churches have Sunday School.² A 1994 nationwide survey of 4,000 churches indicated that, “Sunday School was the third highest-rated, effective evangelistic methodology.”³ If our churches are going to employ the ministry of Sunday School, it is important that the leadership evaluate this ministry in our own local churches and make sure Sunday School is operating at its highest potential in outreach. This is the author’s initial step in this thesis-project. After a long, hard look at the Sunday School of Cathedral of the Cross in Birmingham, Alabama, the need for growth and an outreach focus was clear. This particular Sunday School ministry is considered by its teachers to have a high commitment to teaching the Scriptures and providing opportunity for the fellowship of believers. Is it possible that these teachers and members have neglected the fact that outreach is also an essential element of effective, growing Sunday Schools? This

¹ Doreen Roseman. “Sunday Schools and Social Change in the Twentieth Century,” in *The Sunday School Movement: Studies in the Growth and Decline of Sunday Schools*, eds. Stephen Orchard and John H.Y. Briggs (Bletchley, Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007), 156.

² Barna Group, “Sunday School is Changing in Under-the-Radar But Significant Ways,” *The Barna Group* [home page on-line]; available from <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=192>; Internet; February 1, 2008.

³ Thom S. Rainer, *Effective Evangelistic Churches* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 17.

thesis will explore the need for an outreach focus and implementation plan in the Sunday School ministry of Cathedral of the Cross, Scriptural motivations and presuppositions for using Sunday School for outreach, a survey of relevant literature, the plan for change that was put into motion, and the summary and evaluation of the results as the plan was implemented.

The basic presupposition of this thesis is that encouraging an outreach mindset by implementing a visitation, phone contact, and prayer plan with the leaders and students of the adult Sunday School classes would increase Sunday School visitors and members. Cathedral of the Cross, an evangelical church located in the Southern United States, has a Sunday School ministry with much unrealized potential. A 2006 Barna Group research survey indicates that 29% of adults in the South attend Sunday School, which is the highest percentage of any region of the country.⁴ The same study indicates that evangelicals are the segment of Christianity most likely to attend Sunday School, with 65% of evangelical adults attending Sunday School in a typical week.⁵ Although the church has the advantages of being evangelical and in the South, it has been facing a dwarfed percentage of Sunday morning adult attendees who participate in Sunday School. This will be further demonstrated below. Could it be that encouraging an outreach mindset in Sunday School leaders and students and implementing a visitation, phone contact, and prayer plan would improve the small percentage of adult church attendees involved in Sunday School?

⁴ Barna Group, "Barna By Topic: Christian Education/Sunday School," *The Barna Group Online* [home page on-line]; available from <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=Topic&TopicID=9>; Internet; accessed 21 January 2008.

⁵ Ibid.

Cathedral of the Cross is an Assembly of God church located in Birmingham, Alabama. It is an established church, started in 1957, which grew from a few hundred to an estimated 3,600 in attendance between 1992 and 2005 under the leadership of the Senior Pastor, Mark Correll. In 2005 the church plateaued, then began to decline. The church is located at the edge of the city limits, in a transitioning neighborhood that has faced rapid urbanization. While many more traditional churches in the area have faced significant decline or moved to the suburbs these last fifteen years, Cathedral of the Cross has seen overall growth and welcomed the influx of minority population. Many of these minorities enjoy the celebrative worship style and lively sermons. The multi-cultural constituency is a well-known hallmark of the church.

In 1999 the author of this thesis experienced an expansion in job responsibilities, from Outreach Pastor to Outreach and Education Pastor, including oversight of the Sunday School program. At that time the Sunday School was made up of the traditional on-going, generally age-graded Sunday School classes. The adult classes ranged in size from less than ten to 60 in attendance. The average class attendance was 21 in ten adult classes.

The first Sunday School initiative targeted adults by adding short-term elective classes to the long-term traditional classes. This was combined with a promotional thrust for Sunday School, to include quarterly brochures inserted in the Sunday bulletins and posters that highlighted new elective classes. The Senior Pastor promoted these new classes from the platform and encouraged several church leaders to teach a short-term elective class.

Short-term Sunday School elective classes were initiated each quarter, most were nine weeks, up to 14 classes per year. They included topics like marriage building, finances, breaking generational curses, worship, parenting, singleness, newlyweds, women's interests, spiritual gifts, addictions, books of the Bible, will planning, house buying and mortgages, membership, divorce recovery, personality types, names of God, new believers, ministerial classes, college and career, evangelism, cults, etc.. These classes were not limited in size, and the class size varied greatly, from an average of four to 75. All of these efforts reaped a 21% growth in Sunday School attendance, from the 213 adults on average in the Spring of 2000 to the 258 adults on average the remainder of the year with electives in place. This still left most church attendees uninvolved in Sunday School.

At the beginning of this thesis project in 2006 the church had dropped to an average of 155 adults in 14 on-going classes and 12 elective classes offered during the year. Only 12% of adults attending Sunday morning worship were also attending Sunday School. Several churches in the same area had been experiencing a much higher percentage of their Sunday morning church attendees involved in Sunday School. Telephone interviews revealed that of the eight Protestant churches in the immediate community around the church that reported 150 or more adults in their Sunday morning worship services, seven of them have Sunday School (see Appendix A). These seven churches reported an average of 214 adults in Sunday School, which was 67% of the average number of adults attending the Sunday morning worship service in their churches. Four of these churches were Southern Baptist, two were United Methodist, and one was Non-denominational. There are various theories on

why these churches are more successful than Cathedral of the Cross in attracting attendees to Sunday School. The theories include that other churches have shorter services, less options for children's programs outside of Sunday School, more emphasis on education, and no small group ministry outside of Sunday School. These theories will be discussed below.

Some of the pastoral staff of Cathedral of the Cross had suggested that these churches with higher percentages of adult attendee involvement in Sunday School almost always have shorter morning services. Many churches have one hour services, which leaves them the opportunity to attend both Sunday School and church service in a two hour time span. Cathedral of the Cross has a two hour morning service and a two hour evening service each Sunday. Of the seven other Protestant churches in the same community that have Sunday School and report 150 or more adults in Sunday morning service, the average service length is 71 minutes (see Appendix A). In today's fast-paced urban and suburban settings, many often overcommitted parents and singles are looking for Sunday schedules that do not require as much time in their busy schedule.

There are also more options available to the parents of the church to involve their children on Sunday than many other local churches with strong Sunday Schools. A fully-involved child in Cathedral of the Cross would spend one hour in Sunday School followed by two hours in children's church, then another two hours in a Sunday evening children's program. If parents feel that a Sunday morning educational program is inconvenient for them, then they have other options for their children to be involved at the church, and therefore less incentive to remain for adult

Sunday School while their children are in Sunday School. Of the seven other Protestant churches in the same community that have Sunday School and report 150 or more adults in Sunday morning service, only three reported having as many Sunday children's activities as Cathedral of the Cross (see Appendix A).

In the Assemblies of God denomination in general, and Cathedral of the Cross in specific, much more emphasis is placed on the worship services than the educational programs. Other churches and denominations have a stronger educational emphasis in their history and current church culture. Assembly of God pastor and author Rick Nanez, in his book *Full Gospel, Fractured Minds?: A Call to Use God's Gift of the Intellect* states that Pentecostal believers "excel in the devotional, emotional, and experiential aspects of their faith, but they leave much to be desired in the sphere of the life of the mind."⁶ He is a part of the growing movement to call all Pentecostal and Charismatic churches into a greater use of the intellect for apologetics and a reasoned philosophy and theology that can address contemporary issues inside and outside the church. He also traces the marginalization, and occasional mistrust, of formalized education for Assembly of God ministers in the early history of the denomination. Denominational history and emphasis on the experiential aspects of faith continue to impact many local churches.

At Cathedral of the Cross, Sunday School is not the only opportunity to participate in a small group setting where members can build personal relationships, fellowship, invite friends, and have an interactive Bible study. There is also a small group ministry that began in 1993 that meets on various other days and times in small

⁶ Rick Nanez, *Full Gospel, Fractured Minds?: A Call to Use God's Gift of the Intellect* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 21.

groups around the city, mostly in members' homes. As the church leadership's ministry focus shifted in recent years, the amount of time and resources put into the small group ministry was greatly diminished. Small groups have fallen from the height of 60 groups in 1999 to only three today. The recent near absence of small group ministry outside of Sunday School has not noticeably increased Sunday School involvement. Therefore, it seems unlikely that the presence of a small group ministry is a significant reason for the small percentage of participation in Sunday School at Cathedral of the Cross. The pastoral staff of Cathedral of the Cross also pointed out that some of the local churches with a higher percentage of attendees in Sunday School have no small group ministry outside of Sunday School. Telephone surveys indicated this was not the case. Of the seven other Protestant churches in the same community that have Sunday School and report 150 or more adults in Sunday morning service, five of them have a small group ministry as well (see Appendix A).

The author of this thesis had begun to view the Sunday School ministry through the lenses of his educational and experiential background in evangelism and outreach. Having served as the Outreach Pastor since 1998 and having taken a number of evangelism and church growth classes in seminary, he sought to apply these outreach concepts in his evaluation of the current focus and methodology of the Sunday School department. The important evangelism and outreach concepts that apply here are centered in the two truths – that the spiritually lost need to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ, and they need to see it lived out.

First, it is the Great Commission of each Christian to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who are spiritually lost. Humanity is spiritually separated from God

by sin, and must hear the good news of the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus on the cross in order to become believers. Jesus Christ is the one and only mediator between God and men. Believers should have a thorough understanding of the content of the gospel and be encouraged to share it as they reach out.

The second main outreach concept is that the spiritually lost need to see the gospel lived out. Most adult conversions can be traced to a personal encounter with a friend or family member who shared the good news with them or invited them to church.⁷ The power of a personal relationship between an unbeliever and a believer cannot be underestimated. When the unbeliever hears the gospel from a trusted friend or family member, the truth of the gospel is validated by the believer's lifestyle. The personal relationship also opens the door for a more natural, relaxed presentation of the gospel. Sunday School is a great place to motivate individuals to pray for their lost friends and family and then invite them to a small group setting for relationship building and to hear the gospel.

This thesis project began with developing a plan to evaluate the current philosophy and practice of the teachers in the adult Sunday School classes. This would give an initial benchmark for the teachers and classes to compare against at the end of the project. The first step in the evaluation plan was an Adult Sunday School Teacher's Questionnaire (Appendix B). This survey included questions such as:

- What does your class do well?
- What is being accomplished in your class?
- What are your goals for the class?

⁷ D. James Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion*, 4th ed. (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1996), 22.

- What is the typical time line for your class? (for example; fellowship time five minutes, announcements and prayer requests five minutes, teaching 40 minutes, etc.).
- If your class reaches out to those who do not currently attend church or any Sunday School class, how do you do it?
- Check which of the following applied to your class:
 - We warmly welcome all visitors and invite them to return
 - In class we weekly pray for the lost (neighbors, co-workers, friends, etc.)
 - We make contact by phone with visitors to our Sunday School class
 - Someone from our class personally visits the home of our class visitors
 - We encourage class members to invite others to our class
 - We make contact by phone with those who have stopped attending our class
 - Someone from our class personally visits the home of those who have stopped attending.
- Rank the following items in order of importance to their class:
 - Providing an opportunity for fellowship during class time
 - Fellowship opportunities outside of class
 - Being friendly and welcoming
 - Providing a deep study of the Word of God
 - Providing a Bible Study that is focused on applying God's Word to everyday life
 - Allowing students to ask questions and interact with the teacher's lesson
 - Outreach to those who do not attend any church or Sunday School
 - Helping meet the physical or financial needs of those in class
 - Following up on class visitors and inviting them back
 - Reaching out to those who have stopped attending our class.

The survey sought to find out what the Sunday School teachers thought their class did well, what was being accomplished in their class, what their goals were, what they did and how they used their class time, in which ways do they reach out, and how they prioritize all their class activities by importance.

The completed surveys were compared for general trends in thought and practice. Thirteen out of fourteen adult classes responded to the survey. Evaluating their current practice would reflect more than class tradition, it would reflect the relative importance the teachers and, to a lesser extent, the class members placed on different elements of each class. Concerning how the teachers used their class time, the teachers were asked to give the typical number of minutes used in class for the various elements of their class. Three-fourths of these classes included a fellowship time, using an average of 22% of their class time for this. All of them included announcements and prayer requests, allotting an average of 10% of their class time for this purpose. They all included teaching, using an average of 62% of their class time for this segment. One-fourth of the classes included a closing, allotting an average of 8% of their class time for this. According to time usage, the teachers put teaching first (37 minutes average), fellowship second (13 minutes average), announcements and prayer requests third (six minutes average), and the closing fourth (five minutes average).

When the teachers were asked to rank, according to importance, 10 items concerning their adult Sunday School class, they ranked the teaching items as most important. The two items related to fellowship were ranked in the middle, while many outreach and inreach items ranked last in importance (see chart below).

Item	Importance to Teacher	Category
Bible study focused on applying God's Word to everyday life	1	Teaching
Deep study of the Word of God	2	Teaching
Allowing students to ask questions and interact with the teacher's lesson	3	Teaching
Being friendly and welcoming	4	Outreach
Helping meet the physical or financial needs of those in the class	5	Inreach
Providing an opportunity for fellowship during class time	6	Fellowship
Fellowship opportunities outside of class	7	Fellowship
Outreach to those who do not attend any church or Sunday School	8	Outreach
Reaching out to those who have stopped attending our class	9	Inreach
Following up on class visitors and inviting them back	10	Outreach

When the adult teachers were asked the open-ended question concerning how their "class reaches out to those who do not currently attend church or any Sunday School class," they described their efforts as inviting others (six classes), court-ordered addiction program involvement (one class), required usher training (one class), prayer (one class), financial help or providing meals (one class), and fellowship (one class). Three classes simply responded that they had no outreach. This indicated that these three teachers had a more narrow definition of outreach than the author of the survey, since the same teachers later checked things like, "We warmly welcome all visitors and invite them to return," and "We encourage class members to invite others to our class." These teachers may have defined outreach as reaching out only to those outside the church, while the intent of the survey was to let them include outreach to those inside and outside the church.

The survey also asked the adult Sunday School teachers to check, from a list of outreach activities, all of the outreach elements that applied to their class. 13 classes, 100% of those responding, marked “We warmly welcome all visitors and invite them to return.” 11 classes, 85% of those responding, marked “We encourage class members to invite others to our class.” 10 classes, 77% of those responding, marked “We make contact by phone with those who have stopped attending our class.” 10 classes, 77% of those responding, marked “In class we weekly pray for the lost (neighbors, co-workers, friends, etc.).” Seven classes, 54% of those responding, marked “We make contact by phone with visitors to our Sunday School class.” Three classes, 23% of those responding, marked “Someone from our class personally visits the home of those who had stopped attending.” Two classes, 15% of those responding, marked “Someone from our class personally visits the home of our class visitors.”

When the adult teachers were asked to write their goals for their class, they described their goals as spiritual growth (seven classes), application-oriented teaching (six classes), reaching out to others (five classes), training and discipleship (three classes), fellowship (two classes), Biblical knowledge (one class), strengthen marriages (one class), prayer (one class), deeper teaching (one class), and salvation (one class).

When the adult Sunday School teachers were asked what was being accomplished in their class, their various responses fell into the following categories; specific application, teaching Biblical knowledge, relationship building, spiritual growth, caring for each other, evangelism, raising up teachers, helping the needy,

promptness, and prayer. Eight classes mentioned applying God's Word to specific areas of life; including marriages strengthened, encouragement to testify, training, gaining wisdom, respecting leadership, overcoming insecurities, and breaking patterns and reactions. Five classes referred to the teaching of Biblical knowledge. Two classes listed that relationship building was being accomplished. Two classes mentioned spiritual growth. One class referred to caring for each other. One class listed evangelism. One class mentioned raising up teachers. One class referred to helping the needy. One class listed promptness. One class mentioned prayer as one of the things being accomplished in their class.

To answer the question "What does your class do well?", the Sunday School teachers gave the following responses; application oriented teaching (six classes), deep Bible study (six classes), class discussion (four classes), pray (four classes), fellowship (three classes), contact with class members (one class), and reach out to the community (one class). See the Adult Sunday School Teacher's Pre-Thesis Questionnaire Analysis in Appendix C for a more complete analysis of the teachers' responses to each of the survey questions.

The Senior Pastor, who has served the church for over fourteen years, is reported by the membership to have a strong teaching gift. It has been said by members of the church pastoral staff, that those senior pastors with strong teaching gifts attract into their church membership others with strong teaching gifts. Some of the church Sunday School teachers have a similarly strong teaching gift. These teachers are especially prone to emphasize the teaching element to the point that the other essential elements of fellowship and outreach are marginalized.

Having evaluated the current philosophy and practice of the adult Sunday School teachers, the author was able to more clearly define where the adult Sunday School program was and what steps could be taken in this project to move this ministry towards more effective outreach. Through reading, study, and experience, it became the conviction of the author that a balanced Sunday School philosophy should include; application-oriented Bible study, fellowship that builds personal relationships, and intentional outreach. An evaluation of the Sunday School ministry of Cathedral of the Cross found that the weakest of these three essentials was intentional outreach. The author then applied his previous and current research on Sunday School outreach and visitation methods to develop a plan called “Bridgebuilders.”

Bridgebuilders provides a three-pronged approach to developing a Sunday School outreach using the teacher and members of each class. The three prongs are prayer for the lost, phone contacts, and in-home visitation. The details of methodology and implementation will be spelled out in chapter four. A Sunday lunch meeting was set up for all the adult Sunday School teachers to express appreciation for their continual hard work and to present this plan. Reflecting on the survey results, they were thanked for their commitment to teaching the Word of God in-depth with a view to application and openness in interaction. The teachers were thanked for taking time in their class for fellowship and were reminded of its importance in building relationships. The author also mentioned his thankfulness for what the classes did to reach out, though the survey indicated that there was a higher level of effectiveness and intentionality needed in the classes’ outreach efforts. The

new outreach plan was presented to them as a way to bring adult Sunday Schools to the three essential concentrations: Bible study, fellowship, and outreach. The plan was presented as a four-month trial run and the teachers were asked that they give it serious effort and faithful support during those months. Most of the teachers received the plan with willingness and optimism, and so the plan was implemented.

In chapter two, the two main theological issues that compel Christian churches to an outreach focus and visitation in Sunday School will be explored. They are God's mandate in Scripture to share the message of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone, and the Christian duty to live out our faith before the watching world. The mandate to share the gospel should serve to compel both the leadership and members of Sunday School classes to a greater reflection upon this mandate as a main reason each class and the church as a whole exists. The Bible, as God's revelation to us, will be presented as the authority and standard by which all Sunday School methods will be judged. Scripture also provides us with the content of the message we should share, the motivation to share it, and reveals the Holy Spirit as the One who empowers each class member for the work. Sunday School classes can never fulfill their role in the Great Commission without the realization that discipleship can never begin in someone who has never heard and responded to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Sunday School will be presented as a tool in spreading the gospel, both during class time as outside class as individual class members are encouraged to reach out.

The second main theological issue, the Christian's duty to live out their faith before a watching world, will also be presented. The small group setting of Sunday

School allows non-Christians to come face-to-face with people of faith. This upcoming chapter will show the potential for outreach as the Sunday School ministry can bring non-Christian and Christians together, both in formal and informal settings, so that they can build relationships that allow the non-Christian to see their unconditional love, good works, and the fruit of the Spirit. Presenting these truths to members of a Sunday School ministry should help them see how God can use them relationally in Sunday School based outreach. Understanding the Biblical mandates of the local church and its members to reach out by sharing the gospel and building relationships with non-Christians can encourage and incite an outreach focus in Sunday School leadership and members.

Chapter three provides a survey of important literary sources that have provided insight into this thesis. Many have pointed out that too often Sunday School ministries are maintenance organizations and not outreach tools. In *Revitalizing the Sunday Morning Dinosaur*, Ken Hemphill has enumerated six important principles of an evangelistic Sunday School: growth is a process that includes planning, management, and regular evaluation; permanent growth needs an expanded organizational structure; resources should be invested in the area of greatest harvest; kinship or friendship increases receptiveness to the gospel; growth comes from new classes; and recruiting and training Great Commission oriented leaders is indispensable. His important work reminds the local church that there is the potential to turn introverted Sunday School classes from a self-focus to the “most effective Great Commission tool ever designed.”⁸ Others works will be reviewed, to give

⁸ Ken Hemphill, *Revitalizing the Sunday Morning Dinosaur* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 15.

insight into the statement that Sunday School can be “the major outreach-evangelism arm of the church.”⁹ Sunday School classes can produce a “door of opportunity to create and foster growing receptivity for evangelistic results.”¹⁰

We will also survey works that reflect on the value of Sunday School to the one being invited. Beyond Bible study, a Sunday School class can provide more intimate personal interaction and opportunities for the expression of Christian love and concern to a newcomer or inactive church member. People have a “need to express their problems and fears in an environment of openness and acceptance...see their situations in new perspectives...understand their own feelings...learn principles that enable them to cope...develop new attitudes, find new satisfactions, and learn more mature, productive behavior.”¹¹ This chapter will reflect on works that point to the value of relationships in outreach to the unchurched, and the value of small group ministries, such as Sunday School, in assimilation. The outreach orientation of the first 150 years of the Sunday School movement will also be reviewed. Robert Raikes began Sunday School in 1780 in Sooty Alley, Gloucester, England as an outreach which used the Bible as a textbook to provide a basic education and moral instruction to underprivileged children. This chapter will trace Sunday School’s development over the last 200 years, from a parachurch outreach to mostly underprivileged and American frontier children (1780-1830), transitioning to a church-based and parachurch evangelism tool for children inside and outside the church (1830-1860), to a solely church-based Sunday School that focused on outreach and Christian

⁹ Harry M. Piland and Ernest R. Adams, *Breakthrough Sunday School Work* (Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1990), 10.

¹⁰ Hemphill, *Revitalizing the Sunday Morning Dinosaur*, 13.

¹¹ Billie Davis, *Teaching to Meet Crisis Needs* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1984), 7.

education and separated from “mission schools” that served the underprivileged and frontier children (1860-1929), to the last seventy years where the main focus has slowly shifted to the instruction of the Christian faith. Since the late 1920’s, Sunday School has become “the school of the church.”¹² This also moved Sunday School to a focus on the instruction of the faithful of the church, and not the community as a whole. This survey of historical and outreach related literary sources has added strength to the idea that Sunday School did not originate to be self-focused and there are many who have successfully implemented and maintained an outreach element in Sunday School with effective results from 1780 until today.

In chapter five, the end results of the thesis project’s outreach implementation plan are evaluated and the outcomes are assessed. There is also discussion of the plan’s effectiveness in changing teachers’ mindsets. There is a comparison of the Sunday School teacher’s answers to the Pre-Thesis Adult Sunday School Teacher’s Questionnaire and their answers to the same questionnaire after the project was completed. Each of the three prongs of the outreach implantation plan will be reviewed. This evaluation will help the leadership of Cathedral of the Cross address what changes need to made to our Sunday School outreach methodology and how it can be developed and presented to the leadership and membership of the Sunday School for future growth.

Cathedral of the Cross has a great deal of potential for growth in Sunday School. In Birmingham, Alabama, Sunday School attendance is common among Protestants. In the church’s immediate community specifically, an estimated two-

¹² Jack L. Seymour, *From Sunday School to Church School: Continuities in Protestant Church Education in the United States (1780-1929)* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1982), x.

thirds of Protestant adults in medium to large size churches who attend worship also attend Sunday School. The potential of the Sunday School ministry at Cathedral of the Cross is yet to be realized, as only a small percentage of adult attendees also come to Sunday School. The goal of this thesis is to implement a Sunday School outreach plan that will increase Sunday School attendance through visitation, phone contacts, and prayer. In seeking that goal, an overflow of that implementation plan should be that Sunday School teachers and members come to understanding more clearly that outreach is just as important for their class as teaching or fellowship.

Chapter Two

Scriptural Motivation and Presuppositions

If Christian churches are to have a Sunday School ministry and invest their time and resources into developing and implementing an outreach focus in their Sunday School ministry, they must first ask, “What has God, through His Word, revealed to the church concerning this goal?” Two of the theological issues that compel Christian churches to an outreach focus and visitation in Sunday School are:

- God’s mandate in Scripture to share the message of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone
- the Christian duty to live out our faith before the watching world.

In the Scriptures, the text of every Sunday School class, God reveals Himself and His truth on these matters to mankind. This Divine revelation is the “mind of God”¹³ clearly expressed in human ideas and language. The London Baptist Confession of 1644 correctly stated, “In this written word God hath plainly revealed whatsoever He thought needful for us to know.”¹⁴ The final result of this revelation is an authoritative standard, by which church leaders can measure all belief and efforts of the church. Therefore, a careful study of Scripture on these matters is essential to determine the mind and will of God for outreach through Sunday School.

Scripture is the only authoritative source of the truth of who God is, the fallen state of mankind, and salvation through the Living Word, Jesus Christ. God has revealed Himself for a purpose. A primary purpose is saving lost humanity and

¹³ Lewis A. Drummond, *The Word of the Cross: A Contemporary Theology of Evangelism* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 50.

¹⁴ The Spurgeon Archive, “London Baptist Confession of Faith A.D. 1644,” The Spurgeon Archive [home page on-line]; available from <http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/creeds/bc1644.htm>; Internet; accessed 21 January 2008.

empowering His church to glorify Him by making, edifying, and equipping disciples in every ethnic group of the world. This thesis will seek to explain how Sunday School can have an important role in all of these crucial areas of the church's mission. Every church ministry should be evaluated in terms of its contribution to the Biblical mandates of the church.

God has given the church his Word, which commands His people to go and reach out, motivates and equips the saints, and reveals the power source for His work. Christians are commanded to "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation."¹⁵ The church's Biblical motivations to reach out and evangelize are obedience to His command,¹⁶ love for people,¹⁷ and to bring glory to God.¹⁸ Scripture not only provides the motivation, it also equips us with the content of the good news that "is the power of God for the salvation of all who believe."¹⁹ Christians are further personally equipped by the power of the Holy Spirit, which can empower a believer to do His work and share His Word.²⁰

History demonstrates that when the church views Scripture highly and interprets it properly, missions and evangelism usually follow.²¹ Outreach, through church ministries like Sunday School, should be a natural outflow of a church that takes seriously its Scriptural mandates and divine mission.

This divinely inspired and Scripturally mandated outreach, missions, and evangelism emphasis should not be limited to international efforts, but can be as

¹⁵ Mark 16:15.

¹⁶ Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:47-48, Acts 1:8.

¹⁷ Matthew 5:43-46, 22:39.

¹⁸ Psalm 86:12, Isaiah 60:21, Romans 11:36, I Corinthians 6:20, 31, Revelation 4:11.

¹⁹ Romans 1:16.

²⁰ Avery T. Willis, Jr., *The Biblical Basis of Missions* (Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1990), 62.

²¹ Drummond, 88.

simple as what Bill Hybels calls a believer's "walk across the room."²² Members of Sunday School classes can be encouraged to have a genuine interest in others that sends them across the hall at their work place or on a journey next door to befriend an unchurched neighbor. The ability of individual Sunday School class members, who catch the vision of the divine mission of outreach, to contribute to the outreach and evangelism efforts of the church cannot be underestimated.

In proclaiming the good news, Christians are proclaiming a person. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the central focus of the gospel. It is through Christ alone we have a mediator who enables forgiveness, redemption, and reconciliation with God. Salvation comes through personal faith in Jesus Christ, accepting Him as Savior and Lord and placing our entire trust in Him for eternal life and daily living. Sunday School classes and their activities can be a place where the unchurched can encounter the Person and message of Christ.

Church-based classes have a ready platform to go beyond a surface reference to God or "a Power greater than ourselves"²³ found in many secular self-help and support groups. Theologically we recognize that we find real transforming power only in God and His Word. The Bible says, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will."²⁴ The Word of God presented in Sunday School not only sheds light on mankind's true

²² Bill Hybels, *Just Walk Across the Room: Simple Steps Pointing People to Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 22.

²³ AA, "The Big Book Online Fourth Edition," *Alcoholics Anonymous* [home page on-line]; available from http://www.aa.org/bigbookonline/en_BigBook_chapt5.pdf; Internet; accessed 21 January 2008.

²⁴ Romans 12:2.

condition, it also shows us the way we should go, the motivation we should have, and the power available for obedience. “The Bible is the basis of all lifechange!”²⁵ The Bible is our primary resource to transform lives. Paul stated that Timothy, from childhood, had “...known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”²⁶ Outreach to those who do not attend any church or Sunday School will bring unchurched people into contact with His transforming Word.

After his resurrection, Jesus gave his disciples their marching orders, which is also known as the Great Commission. “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”²⁷ The first step in making disciples is evangelism. Outreach and discipleship are essential components of the ministry efforts of any church seeking to obey the Great Commission. Sunday School is a place where both outreach and discipleship can occur. Sunday School outreach is church-based, and therefore conducive to introducing a new believer into the life of a local church where they can publically demonstrate their faith through believers’ baptism. Parachurch outreach may not be as conducive to this command to baptize.

Jesus also commands the disciples to teach “them to obey everything I have commanded you.”²⁸ Sunday School provides a great place for learning Jesus’ commands found in Scripture, applying these commands to a believer’s life

²⁵ Bruce H. Wilkinson, *The Seven Laws of the Learner* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Press, 1992), 122.

²⁶ II Timothy 3:15.

²⁷ Matthew 28:19-20.

²⁸ Matthew 28:20.

situations, and seeing the example of teachers and other Christians whose lifestyles inspire obedience to his commands. Sunday School outreach and evangelism can start someone on the path to discipleship. It can also be a setting where discipleship is being accomplished through teaching Scripture, moral and spiritual modeling, and life application.

This is the first of two theological issues that are central to the value of Sunday School. Sunday School is a place where people encounter the transforming gospel of Jesus Christ and the Biblical mission of the church and its members to reach out in evangelism. The Sunday School ministry can be a tool to convict the lost through contact with God's Word, motivate church members to follow the command of Scripture to reach out, and help the church accomplish the Great Commission.

The second issue at the core of Sunday School as an outreach tool is the truth that the unchurched need to see the Word of God lived out before them. Sunday School classes and class activities can be a context where the unchurched can be with believers in less formal settings than the weekly church service. This will allow the unchurched individual to enter the church more at ease, as they build relationships with believers and see their good works, unconditional love, and the fruit of the Spirit in their lives.

The American Religious Identification Survey, a 2001 random phone survey of 50,281 Americans by the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, reported that 16% of adults had changed "their religious preference or

identification”²⁹ in the past. With the current population of the United States being over 303,300,000³⁰, that would indicate that over 48 million Americans will change their religious preference in their adult years. What causes this change in religious preference? In her article entitled, “A Season for New Faiths” *USA Today* writer Cathy Lynn Grossman shares the popular thought on conversions in the 21st century - “theology rarely drives conversion. Family does.”³¹ Her examples include interfaith marriages and people who were looking for a community in which to belong and feel included. While the Christian church disagrees with the assertion that theology is a peripheral issue, we do agree that human relationships are an important tool of God in bringing many to faith in Jesus Christ.

Many unchurched who have not attended a particular church before may feel uncomfortable walking into the church when they do not know anyone. If a member of a Sunday School class has invited them, they can meet and walk in with them. Once they are there, they can attend the Sunday School class where they have the opportunity to meet others. If the worship service follows, they can enter the service already knowing several members of the church through the class.

The individual class members are also encouraged to build a bridge of friendship with those around them every day for the purpose of relational

²⁹ Barry A. Kosmin, Egon Mayer, and Ariela Keysar, “American Religious Identification Survey,” (2001) *gc.cuny.edu* [home page on-line]; available from http://www.gc.cuny.edu/faculty/research_briefs/aris.pdf; Internet; accessed 21 January 2008.

³⁰ US Census Bureau, “US Population Clock,” *US Census Bureau, Population Division* [home page on-line]; available from <http://www.census.gov/main/www/popclock.html>; Internet; accessed 29 January 2008.

³¹ Cathy Lynn Grossman, “A Season for New Faiths,” (2003) *usatoday.com* [home page on-line]; available from http://www.usatoday.com/life/2003-04-15-converts-main_x.htm; Internet; accessed 21 January 2008.

evangelism.³² They use these friendships and develop new ones with the purpose of sharing the good news, living a Christian example, and inviting them into relationships with other believers. One of the best ways to invite the unchurched into relationship with unbelievers is a small group ministry, such as Sunday School.

Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, proclaimed the role believers have in this unbelieving world: "You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."³³ God has called His people to be salt and light, and this is accomplished by good deeds that set the believers apart from the status quo of cultural norms. Often, these good works provide the building material for believers to construct or strengthen relational bridges over which the gospel can be carried to the unbeliever. This also opens doors to invite others who would have been typically more resistant to Sunday School classes and activities.

Most individuals who become Christians as adults do not trace their salvation to a mass evangelism crusade, evangelistic television program, or visiting a church in which they knew no one. Most adult conversions can be traced to a personal encounter with a friend or family member who shared the good news with them or invited them to church.³⁴ The power of a personal relationship between an unbeliever and a believer cannot be underestimated. When the unbeliever hears the gospel from a trusted friend or family member, the truth of the gospel is validated by the

³² D. James Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion*, 4th ed. (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1996), 20.

³³ Matthew 5:13-16.

³⁴ Kennedy, 22.

believer's lifestyle.³⁵ The personal relationship also opens the door for a more natural, relaxed presentation of the gospel which might not have been possible with a stranger.

Likewise, the influence of a friend or relative is important in why people come to church. Charles Arn indicates that at least three-fourths of people visit a church through the influence of a family member or friend, while only one to two percent just walk-in.³⁶ Thom Rainer's study of new believers, asked the question "What factors led you to choose this church?" Two of the top-mentioned responses were relational; one-third said a family member attends, and one-fourth mentioned relationships other than family members.³⁷ Added to this, four out of ten mentioned that "someone from church witnessed to me."³⁸ These numbers indicate the importance of personal relationships in reaching the unchurched. The Sunday School ministry is a great place to encourage believers to reach out. It can also serve as an open door, by which these unchurched visitors can enter a local church.

When a person comes to Christ through a friend, that friend becomes "a natural source for nurture."³⁹ It would also be likely that the believing friend's Sunday School class or small group would be effective in follow-up and the assimilation of the new believer into the life of the church. Research indicates that Sunday School attendance is a much more effective in assimilation than church attendance alone. One study found that "those who are active in Sunday School were

³⁵ Paul Little, *How to Give Away Your Faith*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1988), 40.

³⁶ Thom S. Rainer, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 73.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 74.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Kennedy, 23.

five time more likely to remain assimilated in the church than those who were in worship services alone.”⁴⁰ Rick Warren states that, “Relationships are the ‘glue’ that keeps people connected to your church...relationships play an even more important role in moving people to maturity.”⁴¹ Small groups, such as Sunday School, are more effective than church attendance alone in the discipleship and assimilation needed for those we are trying to reach.

Sunday School is a great place to motivate individuals to pray for their lost friends, family, co-workers, and acquaintances. There are at least two results of this prayer for the lost: one, God answers prayer and lost individuals are brought into the kingdom of God; and two, the believers increase their personal burden for the lost and desire to reach them. In *The Essentials of Prayer*, E. M. Bounds writes, “The ingathering of the harvest of earth for the granaries of heaven is dependent on the prayers of God’s people.”⁴² In *The Possibilities of Prayer*, he writes, “Prayer possibility gives not only great power, and opens doors to the gospel, but it...makes the gospel go fast and to move with glorious swiftness.”⁴³

Prayer is the responsibility and privilege of each Christian in Sunday School as well as an access to the divine power to accomplish God’s will in outreach. The example was set by Jesus who did not limit His prayers to the disciples only. “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message.”⁴⁴ Our ministries cannot limit their prayers to those already in their ranks.

⁴⁰ Thom S. Rainer, “The Pastor: Key to a Vibrant, Growing Sunday School,” *Enrichment Journal* 7 (Fall 2002): 19.

⁴¹ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 339.

⁴² E. M. Bounds, *The Complete Works of E. M. Bounds on Prayer* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990), 131.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁴⁴ John 17:20.

As Christians pray for the lost, they also can be moved with compassion for them and increase their desire to be a part of an unbeliever coming to know the Lord. When Jesus was moved with compassion for the lost, he called the disciples' attention to the need to pray for laborers. "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them...he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'"⁴⁵ Certainly the disciples, except for Judas, found themselves answering their own prayer for laborers. E. M. Bounds said, "The scarcity of laborers in the harvest is due to the fact that the church fails to pray for laborers according to His command."⁴⁶ Our church ministries should pray for the lost, develop our desire to reach them, pray for more laborers, and be willing to labor in the ripe spiritual harvest fields of these last days.

Jesus said of Himself, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."⁴⁷ Jesus is the shepherd who would leave "...the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it" and explains "...that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."⁴⁸ Jesus set the example of a desire to seek out and go after those who are lost. He is the Master who has prepared a wedding banquet and sends His servants to "Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled."⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Matthew 9:36-38.

⁴⁶ Bounds, 131.

⁴⁷ Luke 19:10.

⁴⁸ Luke 15:4, 7.

⁴⁹ Luke 14:23 (NAS).

The example of Christ can help motivate the members of the Sunday School classes toward a desire to reach out to those who do not yet attend their class or church.

The gospel must be lived out to be believable. A loving community of faith stands out in a world where conditional love abounds. Jesus said, “As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”⁵⁰ Jesus prayed that all believers, “...be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”⁵¹ Francis Schaeffer summarized Christ’s teachings on this by stating,

...we are to love all the Christian brothers in a way that the world may observe. This means showing our love to our brothers in the midst of our differences – great and small – loving our brothers when it costs us something, loving them even under times of tremendous emotional tension, loving them in a way the world can see...Love – and the unity it attests to – is the mark Christ gave Christians to wear before the world. Only with this mark may the world know that Christians are indeed Christians and Jesus was sent by the Father.⁵²

Reflecting on the fact that the world will know we are Christians by our love, authors Timothy George and John Woodbridge add, “How else *could* they know? They cannot peer into our hearts. But they can read our lips, see our lives, and observe the way we relate to one another.”⁵³ They contend that the love of God is seen in Christians as they display the fruit of the Holy Spirit in their relationships with other Christians. The “...fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience,

⁵⁰ John 13:34-35.

⁵¹ John 17:23.

⁵² Francis Schaeffer, *The Mark of the Christian* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1970), 29.

⁵³ Timothy George and John Woodbridge, *The Mark of Jesus: Loving in a Way the World Can See* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2005), 26.

kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control”⁵⁴ and “Neither our evangelistic efforts, nor our social action, nor our apologetic efforts will receive God’s full blessing if we do not evidence the fruits of the Holy Spirit in our relations with each other as believers.”⁵⁵ Unbelievers can be invited to formal and informal settings, through the Sunday School ministry, to see this fruitful love lived out before them.

Not only are we called to love each other, we are also called to love all people as a neighbor – even as we love ourselves.⁵⁶ Jesus, our example, extended this love beyond those who reciprocated it. He loved all those who crossed His path, even reaching out to the most unlovable of society. He commands that we extend our love beyond only those who give it in return.⁵⁷ Christ commands that His followers even love their enemies.⁵⁸ Church historian Henry Chadwick, in his book, *The Early Church*, wrote that, “The practical application of charity was probably the most potent single cause of Christian success. The pagan comment ‘See how the Christians love one another’ (reported by Tertullian) was not irony.”⁵⁹ There is a powerful influence available to the church in its outreach efforts: the observable love of Christians. The gospel must be lived out in love. A loving community, such as a Sunday School class, forms an ideal place where the gospel can come to life in front of an unbeliever.

⁵⁴ Galatians 5:22-23.

⁵⁵ George and Woodbridge, 20.

⁵⁶ Matthew 22:39.

⁵⁷ Matthew 5:46.

⁵⁸ Matthew 5:44.

⁵⁹ Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1993), 56.

Outreach through Sunday School helps believers accomplish the Divine mandate to share the gospel, and provides opportunity for the people of God to live out their faith to the watching world. Through Sunday School based outreach the local church can join in the purpose and mission of Christ to seek out the lost in response to His command, out of love for humanity, and to bring God glory. Sunday School based outreach also encourages believers to build relationships with the unchurched, in order that their evident love, good works, and the fruit of the Spirit can bear witness to the message of the church. With these Biblical concepts presented, each Christian should be able to see how participating in this type of outreach can advance the kingdom of God.

Chapter Three

A Survey of Relevant Literature

This chapter will survey some of the relevant literature in the fields of Sunday School outreach theory and methodology. This review will touch on the areas of developing an evangelistic focus in Sunday School, the benefits of Sunday School outreach in assimilating individuals into the church, and Sunday School outreach as an inroad for discipleship and a catalyst for relationship building that leads to numerical growth and retention. It will also address Sunday School outreach as a way to encourage Christians to share their faith, the suggested receptivity to outreach revealed in recent research with new Christians and the unchurched, the benefits of Sunday School visitation, organizational ideas for Sunday School outreach, and the value of Sunday School in dialogical learning and meeting the felt needs of those who visit. This chapter will conclude with a historical survey that reveals the outreach focus of the first 150 years of Sunday School.

Several books on Sunday School outreach have indicated that too often Sunday School ministries are maintenance organizations and not outreach tools. They point out that Sunday School leadership has the potential to turn introverted Sunday School classes from a self-focus to the “most effective Great Commission tool ever designed.”⁶⁰ In *Revitalizing the Sunday Morning Dinosaur*, Ken Hemphill has enumerated the six principles of an evangelistic Sunday School. First, the Process Principle states that evangelistic growth is not an event, but a process that includes “planning, goal setting, management of resources, and regular evaluation of

⁶⁰ Ken Hemphill, *Revitalizing the Sunday Morning Dinosaur* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 15.

results and effectiveness.”⁶¹ Second, the Pyramid Principle states that to have permanent growth you need to expand the base or organizational structure. Developing new units and departments accomplishes this task. Third, the Receptivity Principle states that “the church should invest most of its resources where they will return the best evangelistic harvest.”⁶² Sunday School classes can produce a “door of opportunity to create and foster growing receptivity for evangelistic results.”⁶³ Those facing a life transition or crisis, for example, would be found to be more receptive. Fourth, the Homogenous Principle recognizes that “the gospel witness travels with greater receptivity through a kinship or friendship.”⁶⁴ Fifth, the New Unit Principle that states that growth comes from new classes, new churches and new members. Older classes can be hard for newcomers to penetrate, but a stream of new ones can maintain a flow of new life. Finally, the Leadership Principle reminds us that recruiting and training Great Commission oriented leaders is indispensable. His work provides valuable insight on turning introverted Sunday School classes into effective outreach tools of the church. Sunday School can be “the major outreach-evangelism arm of the church.”⁶⁵ A 1994 nationwide survey of 4,000 churches indicated that, “Sunday School was the third highest-rated, effective evangelistic methodology.”⁶⁶

What could be the result of bringing the unchurched into a Sunday School class? Effective Christian education has long been tied to Christian maturity and congregational loyalty. A 1999 Search Institute study of nearly 11,000 individuals

⁶¹ Ibid., 11.

⁶² Ibid., 13.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Harry M. Piland and Ernest R. Adams, *Breakthrough Sunday School Work* (Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1990), 10.

⁶⁶ Thom S. Rainer, *Effective Evangelistic Churches* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 17.

from 561 congregations stated, “Of all the areas of congregational life we examined, involvement in an effective Christian education program has the strongest tie to a person’s growth in faith and to loyalty to one’s congregation and denomination.”⁶⁷ Someone who enters the church through a Sunday School class is more likely to be assimilated into the local church. When someone comes to Christ through a friend, that friend becomes “a natural source for nurture.”⁶⁸ It would also be likely that the believing friend’s Sunday School class would be effective in follow-up and assimilation of the new believer into the life of the church.

Research indicates that Sunday School attendance is a much more effective assimilation tool than church attendance alone. A 1999 study of over 350 Southern Baptist churches of various sizes in various parts of the country, found that, “those who are active in Sunday School were five times more likely to remain assimilated in the church than those who were in worship services alone.”⁶⁹ Gary McIntosh and Glen Martin suggest that the first question a person asks in becoming a part of a church is, “Am I liked?”⁷⁰ They suggest that the question will never be answered for them outside of relationships. A small group ministry, like Sunday School, provides an ideal setting for relationships that can move from outreach naturally into assimilation.

Based on a survey of 208 growing churches and 197 plateaued or declining churches of various sizes and areas of the country, Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger

⁶⁷ Peter L. Benson and Carolyn H. Eklyn, *Effective Christian Education: A National Study of Protestant Congregations: A Summary Report on Faith, Loyalty, and Congregational Life* (Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute, 1999), 2.

⁶⁸ D. James Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion*, 4th ed. (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1996), 23.

⁶⁹ Thom S. Rainer, “The Pastor: Key to a Vibrant, Growing Sunday School,” *Enrichment Journal* 7 (Fall 2002): 19.

⁷⁰ Gary McIntosh and Glen Martin, *Finding Them, Keeping Them: Effective Strategies for Evangelism and Assimilation in the Local Church* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1992), 85.

found that the growing churches most often had a more simple discipleship process. In their book, *Simple Church*, this simple discipleship process is described as having clarity, moving disciples to greater levels of commitment and spiritual vitality, and bringing into alignment all church programs around this process. They propose that moving people in this discipleship process requires a small group for “When people move to a group, they stick...they continue in the life of the church.”⁷¹ In these growing churches, discipleship is tied to relationships that happen in groups. They list a Sunday School class as one type of small group that can be effective in promoting discipleship and retention.

One of the keys to Sunday School’s effectiveness in outreach and assimilation is relationships. Rick Warren states, “relationships are the ‘glue’ that keeps people connected to your church. But relationships play an even more important role in moving people to maturity; they are absolutely essential for spiritual growth.”⁷² In *The Habits of Highly Effective Churches*, researcher George Barna states, “To underscore the importance of relationships, highly effective churches place the vast bulk of their numerical-growth efforts into relational marketing.”⁷³ This relational marketing, he describes, is the churches’ efforts to reach out through church members’ relationships as opposed to impersonal means such as advertizing.

Likewise, the influence of a friend or relative is an important factor in why people come to church. W. Charles Arn’s work on this topic indicates that 75% to 90% of people visit a church through the influence of a family member or friend,

⁷¹ Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2006), 154.

⁷² Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 339.

⁷³ George Barna, *The Habits of Highly Effective Churches* (Ventura, CA: Issachar Resources, 1998), 70.

while only one to two percent just walk-in.⁷⁴ Thom Rainer's study of 353 new believers who had previously been out of church more than ten years, asked open-ended questions like "What factors led you to choose this church?" Two of the top mentioned responses were relational in nature; a family member attends (mentioned by 38%), and relationships other than family members (mentioned by 25%).⁷⁵ Added to this, 41% mentioned that "someone from church witnessed to me."⁷⁶ These numbers indicate the importance of personal relationships in reaching out to those who are unchurched. The Sunday School ministry is a great place to encourage believers to get involved in outreach. It can also serve as an open door for the unchurched to enter a local congregation.

Some have called evangelism a "fear word" that Christians "react primarily in hostility,"⁷⁷ to when they hear it. Evangelism in the context of Sunday School outreach, should not bring up the same images as street preaching and door-to-door calls to people who have no connection to the church or its members. Street preaching and door-to-door "cold calls" have their place, but this thesis aims at outreach that would include each believing adult, not just those who feel evangelistically zealous. It is true that many Christians see a need to share their faith. A 2002 nationwide Barna research study of 1,014 adults, indicated that 55% of born again adults have shared their faith in the last 12 months.⁷⁸ The percentage increases

⁷⁴ Thom S. Rainer, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 73.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 74.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Brian Kelly, *One Step Closer to Christ: Evangelism as Spiritual Pilgrimage Together* (Scotts Valley, CA: Barnabas Missions Unlimited, 2000), 9.

⁷⁸ Barna Group, "Survey Shows How Christians Share Their Faith," *The Barna Group* [home page on-line]; available from <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=181>; Internet; January 29, 2005.

to 66% among Evangelicals.⁷⁹ It is also true that most American Christians are ineffective in reaching the lost for Christ, since “it takes eighty-five church members in the United States a year to reach one person for Christ.”⁸⁰ Thom Rainer states the ten reasons he believes people do not share their faith are; spiritual lethargy resulting in disobedience, growing inclusivism in people’s understanding of salvation, growing disbelief in Hell, busyness, fear of rejection, a desire to be tolerant, losing the habit of witnessing, lack of accountability, failure to invite the unchurched to church, and the fact that many Christians attend churches that do not reach the unchurched.⁸¹ Developing a Sunday School outreach will help people have an opportunity to reach out and get beyond some of these common reasons for not sharing their faith.

In *The Unchurched Next Door*, Rainer analyzed interviews of 306 unchurched adults of various backgrounds from across the country and Canada to determine their spiritual receptivity. He found that 5% were highly resistant and antagonistic; 21% were resistant to the gospel, but not antagonistic; 36% were neutral with no apparent resistance or receptivity; 27% were receptive to the gospel and the church; and 11% were highly receptive to the gospel.⁸² The highly receptive 11% of the “160 million unchurched people in America...are very close to accepting Christ as their Lord and Savior. And many of those 17 million are waiting for someone to tell them about the Savior.”⁸³ His work also indicates that, “82 percent of the unchurched are at least ‘somewhat likely’ to attend church if they are invited.”⁸⁴ The problem is, he states,

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Thom S. Rainer, *The Unchurched Next Door: Understanding Faith Stages as Keys to Sharing Your Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 216.

⁸¹ Ibid., 216 - 231.

⁸² Ibid., 21.

⁸³ Ibid., 174 - 175.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 24.

that “Only 21 percent of active churchgoers invite anyone to church in the course of a year. But only 2 percent of church members invite an unchurched person to church.”⁸⁵ An outreach program through Sunday School would take advantage of the apparent receptiveness among many unchurched and motivate many Christians to actively invite others. Rainer’s work also indicates that these unchurched have past experience with a church-based small group or Sunday School. Only 14% of the highly resistant, 20% of the resistant, 9% of the neutral, 2% of the receptive, and 3% of the very receptive have never attended a small group or Sunday School. Rainer also suggests that, “Today the unchurched are highly reticent to go to a class unless someone they know accompanies them.”⁸⁶ Since most of the unchurched will not come by themselves to Sunday School, it seems all the more imperative to engage in intentional outreach.

Some argue that the idea of in-home visitation is out of date in today’s world where people’s lives are increasingly less communal and more privatized, based around home, television, and computer. Ken Hemphill, in *The Antioch Effect*, argues for eight reasons why churches should have in-home visitations. They are;

- 1) It helps to create the evangelistic atmosphere. It reminds everyone of the responsibility of the church to reach the community;
- 2) It develops a team spirit. People begin to see that evangelism is not the sole responsibility of the pastor;
- 3) A regular visitation program creates an arena of personal accountability. People left to visit on their own usually will not visit at all;
- 4) It gives the participants a vision for supernatural activity. God will give you results and people will thus see the hand of God;
- 5) Visitation is an essential seed sowing activity that will enable you to see an evangelistic harvest through other events...
- 6) A visitation program provides a training opportunity for teaching people to witness;
- 7) Visitation will help sensitize your people to the actual needs that exist in your community...
- 8) Visitation still works!...when an attempt is made to present the gospel by a trained witness,

⁸⁵ Ibid., 25.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 145.

one out of every three lost persons will allow an immediate presentation. For every four times the gospel is presented one person prays to receive Christ.⁸⁷

John Sizemore states, “Effective use of the Sunday School in visitation is not an accident. It must be carefully planned, properly motivated, and persistently promoted if the best results are to be secured.”⁸⁸ Sizemore suggests that Sunday School leaders and members develop a desire in each class to grow numerically through outreach. He also encourages using class and departmental leadership in strategically planning the visitation efforts.

Harry Piland and Earnest Adams suggest that a Sunday School visitation ministry include regular and on-going “personal visits, telephone calls, and cards or letters”⁸⁹ to the unchurched, church members with no class membership, and Sunday School members who have missed class or are in need. They contend that Sunday School leaders and members should visit the unchurched to share Christ and enroll them in their class, visit the non-enrolled church members for enrollment, and visit the Sunday School members to encourage attendance or provide needed ministry. They also suggest that every class have someone in charge of outreach and maintaining a list of those needing a visit. The Sunday School class that best fits the prospect, according to age and related factors, should be the class to contact the prospect. Piland and Adams present a method of tracking prospects, reporting contacts, enlisting and training members for outreach participation, and recognizing

⁸⁷ Ken Hemphill, *The Antioch Effect: Eight Characteristics of Highly Effective Churches* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 173 - 174.

⁸⁸ John T. Sizemore, *The Ministry of Visitation* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1954), 66.

⁸⁹ Piland and Adams, 188.

members' efforts. This method flows through the Sunday School class leaders and departmental leadership.

A modified version of this is used by the Huffman Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, where each Sunday School class has four leadership roles. They are: the teacher, whose focus is instruction; the outreach leader, whose focus is contacting class visitors and other prospects; the care leader, whose focus is contacting class members who have a need or have stopped attending; and a prayer leader, whose focus is prayer and maintaining the class prayer list.

John C. Russell, Senior Associate Pastor of Bell Shoals Baptist Church in Brandon, Florida, developed a Sunday School visitation program called "Bridgebuilders."⁹⁰ His plan sought to build a partnership between the Sunday School ministry and Evangelism Explosion, the visitation and evangelism training ministry of the church. The Sunday School classes would be asked, by their teachers, to elect an outreach leader who would be in charge of signing up one or two class members called "bridgebuilders" each week to go out on the weeknight visitation. On the visitation night the bridgebuilders would be partnered with Evangelism Explosion visitation team members to visit people who had visited the church and other prospects. These visits would be assigned so that the prospect being visited could fit into the bridgebuilder's Sunday School class because of their age and marital status. The bridgebuilders would give a personal invitation to the prospect to join their class.

What is the value of Sunday School to those we invite? Beyond Bible study, a Sunday School class can provide more intimate personal interaction and opportunities

⁹⁰ John C. Russell, e-mail message to author, October 16, 2006.

for the expression of Christian love and concern to a newcomer. It has been even suggested that “the ideal Sunday School class fits almost perfectly the description of a setting where human needs are met and problems can be solved.”⁹¹ People have a “need to express their problems and fears in an environment of openness and acceptance...see their situations in new perspectives...understand their own feelings...learn principles that enable them to cope...develop new attitudes, find new satisfactions, and learn more mature, productive behavior.”⁹² These needs do not have to be relegated to a counselor or professional clergy alone.

Billie Davis maintains that involving church members in outreach through Sunday School, would accomplish four main things. First, it would reach out to the emotional needs of those within our own congregation. Second, it would open up unique outreach possibilities to those in the community. Third, it would involve training more laity in using their spiritual gifts of compassion and teaching, impressing upon the congregation the need to find their spiritual gifts and put them into action. Finally, it would in fact reduce the counseling load of the pastoral staff by mobilizing members of the congregation to meet the emotional and spiritual needs of those in the church and community.

Some argue that the difference between effective and ineffective adult Christian education is the focus of its Sunday School. Because of the way adults learn, especially in applying faith to every day life, the traditional instructional and content-focused classes are deemed by some as less effective, and “dialogical learning” which concentrates on student-focused, experience-centered collaborative

⁹¹ Billie Davis, *Teaching to Meet Crisis Needs* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1984), 7.

⁹² Ibid.

learning in Sunday School is most effective for adults.⁹³ With the Biblical admonitions to preach and teach “the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints,”⁹⁴ churches must not cast aside the instructional role of the teacher. To that instructional role in Sunday School, leaders can incorporate the educational benefits of self-discovery, inquiry, collaborative learning, and group experiences. Of the events on the average church schedule, the Sunday School is the activity most appropriate for the incorporation of these dialogical learning principles.

The incorporation of these dialogical learning principles in a smaller group requires these four essential elements “trust, unity, intentional objectives, and an effective facilitator.”⁹⁵ For Biblical discipleship, learning and change must take place in all four domains; affective (feelings, emotions, and values), behavioral (actions and habits), volitional (will, conviction, and commitment), and cognitive (comprehension and knowledge).⁹⁶ Both churched and unchurched Sunday School visitors can benefit from this opportunity for dialogical learning.

There is a dire lack of knowledge of God’s Word that contributes to the laxity of modern American values, behavior, and convictions. The 1990 Barna Research Group study showed that 93 % of American households had a Bible, but 58% did not know who preached the Sermon on the Mount and 29% did not know how many disciples Jesus had.⁹⁷ Biblical exposure and repetition in Sunday School opens the

⁹³ Israel Galindo, *How to Be the Best Christian Study Group Leader Ever in the Whole History of the Universe* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2006), 5.

⁹⁴ Jude 1:3.

⁹⁵ Galindo, 27.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁹⁷ Findley B. Edge, *Teaching for Results* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1995), 151.

doorway to understanding, conviction, and response⁹⁸ in churched and unchurched visitors.

“Sunday School today remains the longest-lasting and most intact religious movement in American Protestant history.”⁹⁹ The history of Sunday School not only shows longevity and pervasiveness, it shows a gradual change in its’ mission over time. Historical studies clearly indicate that Sunday School was originally developed as an outreach ministry. Outreach served as the main goal of Sunday School for the first 150 years.

Sunday School was developed by English newspaperman Robert Raikes in 1780. He saw the poverty and ignorance among underprivileged children as “conditions that bred crime”¹⁰⁰ and should be addressed while these children are still young. His solution was to hold a school on Sunday, “the one day of the week when children and young people were not working,”¹⁰¹ and use the Bible as the textbook for instruction “in reading, writing, arithmetic, and morality.”¹⁰² Sunday School was born in 1780 among the poor children in Sooty Alley, Gloucester, England. After experiencing some success, he published the concept in the *Gloucester Journal* in 1783. Sunday Schools began to spring up as public leaders, philanthropists, and “some religious leaders such as John Wesley”¹⁰³ accepted this as a model for

⁹⁸ Ibid., 21.

⁹⁹ Merton P. Strommen and Richard A. Hardel, *Passing On the Faith: A Radical New Model for Youth and Family Ministry* (Winona, MN: St. Mary’s Press, 2000), 106.

¹⁰⁰ Jack L. Seymour, *From Sunday School to Church School: Continuities in Protestant Church Education in the United States (1780-1929)* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1982), 26.

¹⁰¹ Stephen Orchard. “From Catechism Class to Sunday School,” in *The Sunday School Movement: Studies in the Growth and Decline of Sunday Schools*, eds. Stephen Orchard and John H.Y. Briggs (Bletchley, Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007), 2.

¹⁰² Seymour, 26.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

education and Biblical instruction among the poor. Perhaps due to their autonomy, very early Sunday Schools “always existed in tension with ecclesiastical authority.”¹⁰⁴ The most notable example of this was the opposition of the bishop of Rochester and the archbishop of Canterbury.

After the Revolutionary War, this same Sunday School model was introduced in America. “These earliest American Sunday Schools, while inspired with religious and humanitarian motives, were almost exclusively founded by public leaders and established outside the church.”¹⁰⁵ 1780 to 1830 was a period where Sunday School was mostly an educational and interdenominational evangelistic parachurch outreach to underprivileged and American frontier children. Several cities, mostly in the Northeast and mid-Atlantic states, formed Sunday School Unions for the spread of Sunday Schools. The pinnacle of this early growth period occurred in 1824 when

the American Sunday School Union was formed with the following purposes: to concentrate the efforts of Sabbath school societies in different sections of our country; to strengthen the hands of the friends of religious instruction on the Lord’s Day; to disseminate useful information, circulate moral and religious publications in every part of the land; and to endeavor to plant a Sunday School wherever there is a population.¹⁰⁶

Their “doctrinal principles were...thought to be essentials...held in common by all evangelical, Protestant denominations.”¹⁰⁷ Robert W. Lynn states that Sunday School became “one of the universal marks of Protestant congregations on either side of the Atlantic.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Stephen Orchard. “Sunday School: Some Reflections,” in *The Sunday School Movement: Studies in the Growth and Decline of Sunday Schools*, eds. Stephen Orchard and John H.Y. Briggs (Bletchley, Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007), xv.

¹⁰⁵ Seymour, 26.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 27.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Gerald E. Knoff, *The World Sunday School Movement* (New York, NY: Seabury Press, 1979), xi.

1830 to 1860 saw the transitioning of Sunday School to a church-based and parachurch evangelism tool for children inside and outside the church. Some of its previous task of education in reading, writing, and arithmetic was being taken over by public schools.

1860 to 1929 was a period of expansion, as evangelicals crossed denominational lines to unify the churches to seek to reform American life through Sunday School. During this period the Sunday School became for many “the primary agent of church growth.”¹⁰⁹ Sunday School now extended to all ages. A line began to be drawn between the Sunday School of the church and the “mission school” which evangelized the poor and unchurched, “particularly ethnic groups.”¹¹⁰ The mission school was “more religious and evangelistic than educational, and its program was usually funded and administered by a local church.”¹¹¹ During this period, the Sunday and Adult School Union sent out the first official Sunday School missionaries and literature were sent to the frontier, American Indians, and African-Americans. Organized and evangelistic Sunday School associations held national conventions, printed national publications and curriculum, and crossed denominational lines. Sunday School unions from England, the U.S., and Canada gathered for the first of many international Sunday School conventions. In England, Sunday Schools had an extensive role in the community’s social life.

Outings, lectures, concerts, publications, sport, temperance societies and so on were associated with the Sunday School...Sunday Schools provided the means and motivation for children to develop an aptitude in debate and the performing arts. No modern governmental programme could possibly mobilize so many opportunities for children to act, sing or speak. It is

¹⁰⁹ Seymour, 30.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

possible that today's children have more opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument, but even this is questionable who one considers the vast number of pianists deployed when Sunday Schools were at their peak, not to mention bands and orchestras.¹¹²

This social role was true to an extent in America as well.

During the last seventy years, the main focus of Sunday School has slowly shifted to the instruction of the Christian faith. Since the late 1920's, Sunday School has become "the school of the church."¹¹³ This also moved Sunday School to a focus on the instruction of the faithful of the church, and not the community as a whole. In England it is said that,

For years Sunday Schools had been the main point of contact between non-churchgoers and the churches...a desire to maintain contact was part of the motivation for sending children to Sunday School...By 1989 only seven out of every hundred children in England attended Sunday School. An institution that once catered for the bulk of the child population had become almost exclusively the preserve of children from churchgoing families.¹¹⁴

As it has been in the past, it can still be today a point of entry into the church for the unchurched. We must recapture some of the lost outreach focus of the first 150 years of Sunday School.

¹¹² Orchard, "Sunday School: Some Reflections," xvii.

¹¹³ Seymour, x.

¹¹⁴ Doreen Roseman. "Sunday Schools and Social Change in the Twentieth Century," in *The Sunday School Movement: Studies in the Growth and Decline of Sunday Schools*, eds. Stephen Orchard and J Jack L. Seymour, *From Sunday School to Church School: Continuities in Protestant Church Education in the United States (1780-1929)* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1982)ohn H.Y. Briggs (Bletchley, Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007), 157.

Chapter Four

Project Design

Since it is important that those in leadership evaluate the Sunday School ministry in their own local church and make sure it is operating at its highest potential in outreach, an evaluation was the author's initial step in preparing for this thesis-project. Having evaluated the Sunday School of Cathedral of the Cross in Birmingham, Alabama, there was a clear need for numerical growth through an intentional outreach plan and focus. This chapter will explore how the Sunday School outreach implementation plan at Cathedral of the Cross was designed.

At the beginning of this thesis project in 2006 the church had an average of 155 adults in 14 ongoing classes and 12 elective classes during the year. Only 12% of adults attending Sunday morning worship were also attending Sunday School. The basic presupposition of this thesis is that by implementing a visitation, phone contact, and prayer plan with the leaders and students of our Sunday School classes; the number of Sunday School visitors and members would increase.

Preparation for this thesis project began with developing a method to evaluate the current philosophy and practice of the teachers in the adult Sunday School classes. This would give an initial benchmark, for the teachers and classes, for comparison at the end of the project. The first step in the evaluation was an Adult Sunday School Teacher's Questionnaire (Appendix B). The questionnaire sought to find out what the adult Sunday School teachers thought their classes do well, what was being accomplished in their classes, their class goals, how they use their class time, in which ways their class reaches out, and how they prioritize all their class activities by

importance. The completed surveys were compared for general trends in philosophy and practice. Evaluating their current practice would reflect more than class tradition, it would reflect the relative importance the teachers and, to an extent, the class members placed on different elements of each class.

When the teachers were asked to rank, according to importance, ten items concerning their class, items related to teaching ranked most important. The two items related to fellowship were ranked in the middle, while many outreach and inreach items ranked last in importance. This emphasis on teaching was seen in the fact that the teachers reported an average 37 minutes teaching, 13 minutes in fellowship, 6 minutes in announcements and prayer requests, and 5 minutes in the closing.

The teachers were asked two questions concerning outreach; one an open-ended question and another requested they choose from a list. When asked the open-ended question concerning how their class reaches out, they most often described their efforts as inviting others. Only one class mentioned prayer and none mentioned visitation. From the list of class outreach activities, each marked welcoming visitors and inviting them to return. Most classes checked encouraging members to invite others, contacting by phone those who have stopped attending, and praying for the lost. Half of the classes checked calling and inviting back class visitors. Less than a fourth of the classes checked any visitation-related outreach.

The teachers were also asked about their goals and accomplishments. When they were asked to write the goals for their class, they most often described them as spiritual growth and application-oriented teaching. One-third mentioned reaching out

to others. Similarly, when they were asked what was being accomplished in their class, most mentioned applying God's Word to the members' lives. Outreach was mentioned by one class. In answering what their class did well, they most often responded with application oriented teaching and deep Bible study. Only one mentioned outreach as something their class did well.

The comparison and analysis of the teacher's responses indicated that teaching was most important in theory and practice. In most classes, fellowship followed next, then inreach, and finally outreach at the bottom of the list. According to the Sunday School practice, the obvious importance of teaching and fellowship was seen by the use of two-thirds of the class time for teaching and almost one-quarter of their time in fellowship. In their outreach efforts to those outside the class, each class mentioned inviting visitors back, and two-thirds mentioned praying for the lost and encouraging members to invite others. Only one half reported phone calls to visitors and one-sixth reported making in-home visits. The questions about importance, goals, and accomplishments reflected their philosophy; and the three top and most common responses were almost always related to teaching. Fellowship, inreach, and outreach ideas followed. While the teachers included in their general class philosophy the importance of outreach, it was not expressed through an intentional plan and focus in most classes. Every class could benefit from an outreach implementation plan, especially the 85% of classes that did not have an outreach method that included visitation. See the Adult Sunday School Teacher's Pre-Thesis Questionnaire Analysis in Appendix C for a more complete description of the teachers' responses to each of the survey questions.

Having evaluated the current philosophy and practice of the adult Sunday School teachers, the author was able to define more clearly where the adult Sunday School program was and what steps could be taken in this project to move this ministry towards more effective outreach. Through study and experience, it became the conviction of the author that a balanced Sunday School philosophy should include: application-oriented Bible study, fellowship that builds personal relationships, and intentional outreach. The evaluation of the Sunday School ministry had revealed that the weakest of these three essentials was intentional outreach. In seeking to apply previous and current research on Sunday School outreach and visitation methods, a context-specific plan called “Bridgebuilders” was developed. Bridgebuilders provides a three-pronged approach to Sunday School outreach using the teacher and members of each class. The three prongs are prayer for the lost, phone contacts, and in-home visitation.

The first prong was prayer for the lost. The Sunday School teachers would be responsible for making sure that their class kept a continually updated list of non-Christians they were praying for weekly. The purpose of their prayers for these non-Christians would be their salvation by grace through faith in Christ. The list could include non-Christian family, co-workers, neighbors, acquaintances, or friends of the teacher and class members. The teacher could take time in class to write the names of these non-Christians on the list, or simply pass around the prayer list for the class members to add names before, during, or after class. The teacher would be at liberty to pray, or have a class member pray, as generally or as specifically as they feel the Lord is directing, as long as prayer for non-Christians is included each week. A

handout for each class, simply entitled “Praying Them In,” with two columns of blank lines for names, was prepared for each teacher. If a Sunday School visitor saw their name on the list, it would probably not cause offense since they would most likely assume they were being prayed into the class, and not into the Kingdom of God.

The teacher would have the liberty to place a class member in charge of the prayer list and the weekly prayer in class for non-Christians, as long as they made sure it was not neglected by the assisting class member. Such an assistant could be given prayer or the prayer list as a specific weekly task, and be given a title or considered as a class officer if the teacher desires. The primary purpose of the prayer list and prayer for non-Christians would be salvation. The secondary purpose of this prayer and prayer list would be to serve as a reminder. The prayer and prayer list would be weekly reminders to each class that there are those in need of Christ and therefore in need of their outreach efforts. This would be a tool that would work weekly against any tendency for the class to be only introspective and self-absorbed.

The second prong of this outreach implementation plan would be phone contacts. This element was essential because of the high number of church visitors, church visitors’ varying schedules, the far distances some visitors travel to visit, and the limitations of elderly Sunday School class members. Cathedral of the Cross experiences a high number of visitors each week. The size of the church, its conspicuous location on a busy commercial parkway, and, most importantly, enthusiastic members who invite others; all contribute the high number of visitors. The visitation ministry, even with the addition of Sunday School class members,

would not be able to contact each visitor in a timely manner. Also, some visitors are not home on the particular weeknight that the visitation teams go out. Phone contacts could be made at variety of days and times, and could reach those unavailable on visitation night. Another important use of phone contacts comes in reaching those who travel a good distance to visit. The church visitor may live further away than a visitation team would travel, given the limited amount of time for weeknight visitation. The final reason for the use of phone contacts, was the physical limitations of some of our older senior adult class members. Many of these do not drive at night, which is when the visitation was to occur.

Those to be contacted by phone were individuals or families that had visited one of the church services and filled out a visitor's card. The visitor's card has a place for name, spouse's name, date of visit, address, phone number, church affiliation and if they currently attend regularly, of whom they are a guest, marital status, age categories to check (under 12, 12-15, 16-20, 21-35, 36-40, 41-65, 65 and over), children's names and ages, and others attending with them. These visitors could be contacted by volunteers in the various Sunday School classes according to the prospect's age and marital status. The Sunday School classes were sorted according to the age range in the class, and marital status for those classes oriented towards singles or married couples. Each Sunday School teacher would hold a class election for, or appoint, a "point person" for outreach. This point person who would be responsible for getting the visitor's information, phone contact reports, and phone contact suggestions from the Sunday School class attendance folder to those volunteers willing to participate. The point person would record which class member

got which visitor name or names for tracking purposes. Only one phone contact was suggested per church visitor. The volunteering class member was to make three attempts at reaching the person by phone, if the first two attempts resulted in an inability to reach the visitor. They could leave a message on the third attempt if the visitor had an answering machine. A phone would be made available at the church, during office hours and on Monday evenings during visitation, for those who preferred calling from the church rather than their personal residence.

A Phone Contact Report (see Appendix D) and the Phone Contact Suggestions handout (see Appendix E) were developed. The phone contact report had a place at the top for a copy of the visitor card's information. The first two blanks were for the class name and the name of the class member making the contact. The next area was for the date and description of the first contact or attempted contact. The next two areas were for recording the second and third contact or attempted contact, if needed. The report ended with a reminder to turn their phone contact reports in with their Sunday School class attendance folder or take them to the Outreach Office. The Outreach Office would retrieve the completed phone contact reports through the class attendance folders. That office would be tracking the phone contact reports given out to make sure they are turned back in. Visitor contacts would be recorded in the Outreach Office to avoid duplication.

The Phone Contact Suggestions handout included a reminder to pray that God would use the call for His glory, a suggestion to read the church visitor's information carefully before calling, a proposed general order to the call, ideas on handling specific situations that might arise, and also things to avoid. In the proposed general

order to the phone call, it was suggested that the class member begin with introducing themselves, and letting the visitor know they are calling for Cathedral of the Cross. Then they could thank them for visiting the church and ask how they enjoyed the service. If they did not have a local church affiliation listed on the visitor's card, then the volunteer could ask if they had a local church they actively attended. If they are not active in any local church, the class member should invite them to return to Cathedral of the Cross. Next the member could introduce their Sunday School class to them.

This introduction would imply that the visitor would be a good fit for the class, since it is made up of people in their own age group and marital status. It could also be an opportunity for a testimony to the positive aspects of the class. The class member could then offer to meet them at the church Sunday morning before Sunday School at an easy-to-find landmark. This way they will have someone they have already met by phone who can walk into their Sunday School class with them.

Next, the handout suggested a specific meeting place that would be easy for visitors to find. If the visitor seems receptive, the member can ask if they have received Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. If they have not, then the member could ask if they would like to receive Him through prayer over the phone. A sample "sinner's prayer" for salvation was placed at the bottom of the handout for a reference.

Finally, in the general order of the call, they should make every effort to end the conversation on a positive note. No matter how receptive the visitor was to the phone call, the closing of the call can be a way to leave a good impression with a

warm gesture of thanks for their time, their visit to the church, or their upcoming visit to the member's Sunday School class. Also included in the handout were suggestions on specific situations that might arise. The first was handling visitors who begin to tell the member their personal problems. The member is instructed to sincerely offer prayer, and encourage the visitor to contact the church office for any counseling needs. Also, if the church visitor has any complaints or requests of the church, they should encourage them to call the church office.

After the call, the member is to fill out the Phone Contact Report. In filling out the report, the member should make sure to record the date for each call along with the results. The results could be how the call went, if there was no contact due to the visitor not being home or not answering, or if the line was busy or disconnected. Even though there is a suggested order for phone contacts, the class members were to make the conversation as natural and unrehearsed as possible.

The handout also mentioned things to avoid. Eating or chewing gum while talking on the phone was mentioned first. The class members were also advised to not participate in a discussion that puts any pastor or church in a negative light. Even if visitors speak negatively of a former church or pastor, any agreement with them could cause offense. If such a conversation arises, they were instructed to change the subject. The change of subject could come by moving to the next step on the suggested call order or by asking if they have any prayer requests. The handout reminded the class members that they should not underestimate what God can accomplish through a single phone call. A note at the bottom of the handout

reminded them that they can call the Outreach Office with any questions, and listed the sample “sinner’s prayer.”

The third and final prong of this outreach implementation plan would be in-home visitation. Each class’s “point person” for outreach, elected by their class or appointed by the teacher, would be in charge of the monthly visitation sign-up sheet as well as phone contacts. The point person would sign-up one or two class members, called “bridgebuilders,” each week to go out on Monday night visitation. The bridgebuilders handout was prepared to explain their role in visitation and what they would do; as well the details of time, place, and what to wear for each volunteer bridgebuilder (See Appendix F). The bridgebuilder’s role in visitation would be limited to accompanying a visitation team for the purpose of introducing their Sunday School class to the church visitor and inviting them to visit their class. They would also be welcomed to participate in as much of the visit as they felt comfortable doing. The handout made it clear that no prior training or experience was required. The handout stated that there is nothing for the bridgebuilder to memorize and they would not need any materials. They were to report on their visitation night to the Fellowship Hall at 7pm. The bridgebuilder would not need to wear a tie or dress, but simply come as they were. A note was added to remind them of the impact of a personal invitation, practical suggestions for the invitation, and the potential for class growth. The handout concluded with a thank you for the class member’s contribution to their Sunday School Class and their desire to build the Kingdom of God.

The bridgebuilders visitation would be a rotational system where class members could sign up monthly or quarterly. No one member would be required to

go on visitation more than once a month unless that was their desire. Larger classes could rotate bridgebuilders on a much less frequent basis. People who wanted to sign-up more frequently could, but the goal would be to spread the effort to a plurality of volunteers. Getting a larger number involved would assure that a higher percentage of the class would be able to experience visitation. One of the outcomes of this involvement should be a greater outreach mentality among the class membership. Also, a plurality of visitation volunteers would mean that no one person's schedule is significantly taxed. It would be rare to find a class member that could not find one night a month to participate.

Each class point person would communicate the names of the volunteers on their monthly bridgebuilders sign-up list to the Outreach Office before the first Monday of the month for planning purposes. Before, during, or after Sunday School, the point person would remind the class member or members who had signed up for the following Monday night's visitation that their day to visit was the next day. They would also remind new bridgebuilders of the time and place for visitation. The point person is to make sure a substitute is found if the member who signed up is unable to attend their visitation night. Their job would include communicating any changes in the schedule to the Outreach Office. The monthly sign-up form would be delivered to the point person to be used with their class.

A handout with the job description of the point person was prepared. It also included the role of the Sunday School teacher, and was titled "Bridgebuilders Leadership" (See Appendix G). The exact role of the Sunday School teacher in the bridgebuilders ministry, as listed in the handout, included: holding an election for, or

recruiting and appointing, the point person for their class; announcing, or allowing the point person to announce, the bridgebuilders sign-up monthly; and making sure the class prays for the lost weekly. The handout also summarized for the job description of the point person for the teacher's future reference. The teachers would be given essential roles, but an effort was made in the outreach implementation design to put as little responsibility on the teacher as possible. This was an effort to not overburden the teachers who already had weekly teaching and class leadership duties. It also would allow for an expansion of class leadership as the point person took on a leadership role.

The visitation program of the church was centered around a ministry called Evangelism Explosion. Evangelism Explosion (EE) is an evangelism training program that trains lay people to share their faith by means of a 13-week class with a heavy emphasis on weekly on-the-job training opportunities. Their goal is that the new EE student, at the completion of the course, will be able to be a "trainer" and lead future new students out on visitation. The course covers learning a presentation of the gospel that could be tailored to fit a wide variety of witnessing situations, and is to be shared by the witnesses as a way of life. The class is offered two to three times a year at Cathedral of the Cross. During the class semesters, the class meets for one hour, followed by visitation for an hour and a half. This visitation pairs new students with those trainers who have completed the class and passed the certification test. This Monday night EE visitation targets only those who had visited the church and filled out a visitor card. The teams usually consist of one trainer and two students. Before Bridgebuilders was to begin, the visitation cards were grouped by

area to minimize the time it takes to drive to various visits. This outreach implementation plan would include sorting the visitors' cards in a new way. The Outreach Office would presort the visitors' cards according to which bridgebuilders would be in attendance on a particular Monday night. The teams would be organized ahead of time according to the age range and marital status of the classes represented by the bridgebuilders, and the ages and marital status of the church visitors to be reached. If there are enough church visitors' cards and volunteers, special consideration in preparation could be given to where these church visitors lived, so that a team can see visitors in the same area. A phone call was not made to the church visitors to ask permission to visit, following the Evangelism Explosion guidelines.

The visitation teams would be given a copy of the prospect's visitor's card. Attached to it would be a copy of the appropriate page from the county map book, with the specific address highlighted. Driving directions, acquired from the internet, would be attached linking one visitor's map and address to the next. Along with their pre-assigned visitor's cards, the teams would also take church information with them on visitation. The church information would include a list of all Sunday School classes attached to a map of the church. This way the bridgebuilder could circle their class name and mark a place they could meet the church visitor for Sunday School. The team would also carry a small card to leave on the door of a residence with a short personal hand-written note for those who were not home. For those who would pray to receive Christ during a visit, the teams would carry an invitation to the new believer's Sunday School class, and "Partners in Growing," an EE new believer's

booklet with a gospel outline and five means of spiritual growth. They also would carry a brochure of general information about the church and its' ministries to help them answer any questions. Finally, they would carry a New International Version Gospel of John booklet for any visitor who did not have a Bible or mentioned they have a hard time with the old English of the King James Version Bible they own.

Having offered EE classes for nearly ten years, Cathedral of the Cross has had very limited success assimilating into the church those who are visited by EE teams. The "Bridgebuilders" outreach plan would allow Sunday School class representatives to join EE visitation teams and build a bridge between these church visitors and a small group that can facilitate assimilation. EE trained individuals would provide support in sharing the gospel if the need arises. This would help alleviate the bridgebuilder's fear that they are ill prepared to share their faith. The trained EE volunteer can lead the visit, thereby putting these Sunday School volunteers more at ease in each portion of the visit. The EE trainer would take time during the visit to introduce the bridgebuilder, so they could introduce their Sunday School class in the form of description and testimony. As with the phone contacts, this introduction should imply that the visitor would be a good fit for their class, since it is made up people in their own age group and marital status. It could also be an opportunity for a testimony by the bridgebuilder to the positive aspects of the class. The bridgebuilder would then offer to meet them at the church the following Sunday morning before Sunday School at an easy-to-find landmark. This way the church visitor would have someone they have already met who can show them the way to the room and walk with them into the Sunday School class.

The visitation program would benefit from the added volunteers from the Sunday Schools, thereby allowing there to be more three person visitation teams and more total church visitors reached. During the EE class semesters, EE students would attend the class as usual. After class, the bridgebuilders would join them as they are divided into groups. Each team would have one EE trainer, one EE student, and one bridgebuilder Sunday School volunteer. The group could also contain one EE trainer and two bridgebuilders from the same Sunday School class. Another overall benefit to the visitation ministry would be the ability to take visitation follow-up to a higher level. Follow-up had been typically limited to those who prayed to receive Christ on a visit. The follow-up consisted of only one follow-up visit. Some of the EE volunteers had noticed the need for greater follow-up, but also confessed that they did not feel as motivated to do follow-up visits as they did first-time visits. Now EE volunteers can have the assistance of bridgebuilders in follow-up and assimilating these visitors into the life of the church through a small group where lasting relationships can be built. This outreach implementation plan would put the strengths of EE at the disposal of these Sunday School volunteers, for a synergistic effect.

The outlook of the Sunday School volunteers should also benefit from the outreach passion of the EE volunteers. The bridgebuilders should be more encouraged to be a personal witness in their lifestyle. As the class members are inspired to witness, it becomes a tool for further class growth and developing a deeper outreach focus. The EE volunteers could also develop a deeper understanding of the role of Sunday School in fulfilling the Great Commission.

The next step in this outreach implementation plan design was to develop this project idea into a presentation to show the pastoral staff of Cathedral of the Cross. This project design and methods were presented in the form of a Power Point presentation, followed by discussion with four of the pastoral staff and the author. The purpose was to lay out the plan in detail, fine-tune it if needed, and look for potential problems. The project was well received and most questions were for further information on specific methodology. This helped to refine the Power Point presentation, so that it could be presented more clearly to the Sunday School teachers. The Executive Pastor mentioned that this could not be the “hope of the church” for church growth, but that it would certainly help until systemic changes were made to make the church more relational through a more dynamic small group ministry and vision. In later reflection, the author felt that the principles of this project design could be applied to a future small group ministry as well.

The date was set for a Sunday luncheon in January 2007 for all adult Sunday School teachers. Invitations were printed and delivered, and included the purpose of the luncheon being to express appreciation for their ministry and present an outreach plan to grow their individual classes. Those teachers that did not confirm their plans to attend were contacted by phone to be personally invited. The luncheon meeting was attended by all of the adult Sunday School teachers. The meeting began with words of appreciation for the hard work these teachers had put forth in the Sunday School ministry. Those with especially long tenure were recognized.

The Bridgebuilders plan was then laid out through the modified Power Point presentation, followed by going over the handouts in each teacher’s folder. The

outreach effort was presented as a four-month trial run, and it was asked that the teachers give the plan serious effort and undying support during those months. Reflecting on the Adult Sunday School Teacher's Questionnaire results, the teachers were thanked for their commitment to teaching the Word of God in-depth with a view to application and an openness in interaction. The teachers were thanked for taking time in their class for fellowship and were reminded of its importance in building relationships. These teachers were commended for what their classes did in the area of outreach. As the survey indicates, they were told, there was a higher level of effectiveness and intentionality needed in the classes outreach efforts. The outreach plan was presented to them as a way to bring adult Sunday School classes to a balance in the three essential concentrations: Bible study, fellowship, and outreach. This plan was to help each adult Sunday School class step into the unreached potential of this intentional outreach planning.

Most teachers received the plan with willingness and optimism. The teachers were asked, "What challenges do you foresee?" and "What adjusting do we need to do to make this partnership work?" The teacher of the older Senior Citizens' class mentioned that his class members do not get out at night, and therefore could not attend visitation. Their involvement in the phone contact plan and weekly prayer for the lost were discussed, and this teacher felt his class could be involved in those aspects. The author implied that phone ministry was not meant to be plan "B" for those not interested in visitation. Visitation was explained as an important part of the outreach for all classes whose students can drive at night. They were encouraged to dream big, and imagine the growth potential as new people entered their classes.

They could imagine souls coming to know the Lord and being adopted by their class as a babe in Christ and raised into maturity. One teacher mentioned that he would be interested in visiting those in his class who no longer attend. This idea was discussed as a future goal, to be considered after this four-month trial run was over. It was presented that if this effort grew, visits could also be made to inactive Sunday School members, class members who need ministry, and evangelistic prospects their class refers to the visitation ministry. The start date was set as January 29, 2007.

As the start date approached, the outreach plan was being presented by the teachers to their classes. A few teachers reported that, “Our class members are unwilling to go on visitation.” Those classes were given the option to do only phone contacts and weekly prayer for the lost. They were to use their “point person” only in the phone contact capacity, as the one to pass out phone contact reports with the visitor’s information and phone contact suggestions to the class volunteers, and noting which class member received which visitor’s phone contact report.

Cathedral of the Cross has a great deal of potential for growth in Sunday School. In Birmingham, Alabama, where Sunday School attendance is common among Protestants, the potential of the Sunday School ministry in outreach is great. These outreach efforts should increase the small percentage of adult attendees who also come to Sunday School. The goal of this thesis is to implement a Sunday School outreach plan that will increase Sunday School attendance through visitation, phone contacts, and prayer. In seeking that goal, an overflow of that implementation plan should be that Sunday School teachers and members come to understanding more clearly that outreach is just as important for their class as teaching or fellowship.

Chapter Five

Summary and Evaluation

In this chapter, the end results of this thesis project's outreach implementation plan are evaluated and the outcomes are assessed. Each of the three prongs of the outreach implementation plan will be reviewed. There is also discussion of the plan's effectiveness in changing the teachers' mindsets. There is a comparison of the Sunday School teachers' answers to the Pre-Thesis Adult Sunday School Teacher's Questionnaire and their answers to the same questionnaire after the project was completed. A discussion will also be given as to how this evaluation will inform the Sunday School outreach methodology at Cathedral of the Cross and how future changes can be developed and presented to the leadership and membership of the Sunday School for potential growth.

At the beginning of this thesis project in 2006, the church had an average of 155 adults in 14 ongoing classes and 12 elective classes during the year. Only 12% of adults attending Sunday morning worship were also attending Sunday School. The adult classes targeted in this thesis project were the fourteen ongoing classes, and the short-term electives were not considered. Before this thesis project, a four week average attendance of the fourteen ongoing non-elective adult Sunday School classes was 106 adults. The basic presupposition of this thesis is that by implementing a visitation, phone contact, and prayer plan with the leaders and students of our Sunday School classes; the number of Sunday School visitors and members would increase.

Most teachers had received the Sunday School outreach plan with willingness and optimism. The class outreach for the older Senior Citizens' class had already

been adjusted, since they have members that do not get out at night and are unable to attend a nighttime visitation. It was agreed that their involvement would be limited to the other two aspects of the plan, phone contacts and prayer for the lost.

Another modification had come as the start date approached and the outreach plan was being presented by the teachers to their classes. Two teachers had reported that their class members were unwilling to go on visitation. Those classes had been given the option to do only phone contacts and weekly prayer for the lost. They were to use their “point person” only in the phone contact capacity.

When the first monthly bridgebuilders visitation calendars were due for the dates of January 29, 2007 to February 26, 2007, only eight classes turned in a calendar with volunteers listed. Follow-up contacts were made with the teachers who had not turned in their calendars. One class mentioned that they were not going to participate in any of the Sunday School outreach implementation plan since they had planned to grow solely through personal relationships and inviting others. The remainder of the teachers who did not turn in the monthly calendar stated that they could not get anyone to sign-up for visitation. There were now a total of six classes of the fourteen where the teacher stated they could not get volunteers for visitation. One class, which turned in a calendar with only one volunteer listed, never had a volunteer actually participate.

It also became apparent that almost all Sunday School teachers were also functioning as the outreach point person. In only one class did they select a point person outside of the teacher. The point person in that class functioned as the plan suggested. That point person took their role seriously and diligently carried it out.

The teacher seemed happy to have the help and the ability to continue to focus on the teaching. That class also had the most individuals involved in visitation.

During the eighteen weeks of bridgebuilders visitation, fifteen individual Sunday School volunteers participated as bridgebuilders. These volunteers came from seven classes. The visitation teams with the bridgebuilders attempted 138 in-home visits. Of those attempts, the teams visited with 83 people. If these individuals had no local church family, they were invited by the Sunday School bridgebuilder to their class. The exceptions to this general rule included the four individuals that accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior during the in-home visit. These four were invited to the new believers' Sunday School class.

During this outreach implementation plan, every class was to be involved in making phone contacts to church visitors. No teacher had expressed concern with being able to participate in this element of the outreach plan. In the end, only four classes ended up participating in phone contacts to church visitors. Of the four classes, only eight individuals participated in the bridgebuilders phone contacts. These volunteers attempted 72 calls, talking to 15 individuals and leaving 25 messages though family members, roommates, or answering machines. Some of the teachers felt their volunteers for phone contacts were already busy with calling class members in need of ministry, and class members who had stopped attending. Others said they could not get a volunteer to make phone calls. Some felt that if they were involved in the visitation, the phone contacts were optional.

During this outreach implementation plan, each teacher was to lead their class to be involved in weekly prayer for the lost. There was no prayer reporting system in

place for the classes. There was no follow-up in this area, so there was no method of knowing if this was being done and in what way. In future application of this, a reporting system could further encourage this element of the outreach plan. As the saying goes, “You don’t get what you *expect*, you get what you *inspect*.” The accountability could demonstrate the importance the church leadership places on prayer in outreach. A reporting system would also be a regular reminder to the teacher to pray for the lost. It could be a way the church leadership receives news of non-Christian friends, family, neighbors, or acquaintances receiving Christ. These reports of salvations could be made known to all the classes and be a further encouragement for the classes to pray for the lost.

After the project, the teachers were asked if their class had any visitors that visited as a direct result of a personal invitation by a bridgebuilders phone or in-home visit. Several teachers said they could not remember anyone who had visited their class directly through a phone contact or in-home visit. Three teachers said they knew of visitors that were a direct result of phone contact or personal visit. One teacher could name one visitor, one teacher remembered two, and the third remembered visitors, but could not remember the exact number.

Before the thesis project, a four week average attendance of the fourteen ongoing non-elective adult Sunday School classes was 106 adults. The four week average for the fourteen ongoing non-elective classes after the thesis project was an average of 101. Two of the participating adult Sunday School teachers stepped down from teaching during the project. This had a negative effect on attendance numbers.

In evaluating this Sunday School outreach implementation plan, three ways of improvement became apparent. First, the questionnaire could be improved to provide more information for use in analysis. Second, the plan could be expanded to further engender Sunday School leadership's commitment to the shared goal of outreach. Third, encouragement could have a greater role in building momentum during the course of the project.

Improvement in the pre-thesis questionnaire could have provided more specific information. While the information on prayer was sufficient, specifics on how the classes reached out through phone and visitation contacts would have been helpful. Added questions for those classes that use phone contacts and visitation could include how many calls and visits were made per week. Questions could also be asked regarding which class members make the calls and visits, who they called or visited, and for what general purpose.

In evaluating the results of this outreach implementation plan, it became clear that not enough time was allotted for allowing the leadership to commit to this plan as a shared goal. "Buy-in," as it is called in the business world, is the term used to describe the degree in which people commit to and rally around a shared goal. During this thesis project, it became apparent that the area of the outreach plan that needed the most improvement was Sunday School leadership buy-in. The plan needed more depth in the area of encouraging the teachers to buy in to this shared goal of outreach. In evaluation of that need, there are several ways in which Sunday School leadership buy-in could be increased.

A total of three meetings, before the plan was implemented, would be advantageous. The first meeting could be with the adult Sunday School teachers, like the lunch meeting that was conducted, where the teachers were presented the plan. The second meeting could be a joint meeting of all participating adult Sunday School class members and teachers. One Sunday morning all the Sunday School classes could spend their first 20 minutes in the auditorium for a joint session where they would be presented with the vision for the Sunday School outreach plan. It could be emphasized at this time that the teachers would be looking for a outreach point person, and how important their role would be. Every class member would be encouraged to participate. This could reduce the discomfort some teachers might have in asking for class members to serve as a point person, phone contact volunteer, or bridgebuilder. This would increase the number of point people, thereby sharing the outreach responsibility, leadership, and increasing the potential for greater outreach. The members, as they hear the plan presented by a member of the church leadership, would be more likely to buy in to the idea and rally around it as a shared goal. This would increase the number of people in the class willing to sign-up as bridgebuilders or phone contact volunteers. The more class members involved, the less often any one person has to work. The plan is more sustainable with many volunteers than when the same few have to do all the work. After this first 20 minutes of Sunday School together, they will travel back to their classes for the remainder of the class time. At this time, they could vote on a class point person.

The third and final meeting before the plan was implemented, could be a meeting for all the elected or appointed outreach point people. The plan could be

explained again with special emphasis on their exact role and responsibilities. The point people could be introduced to those in the outreach office with whom they will be working.

The third main area of improvement needed was continual encouragement. Encouragement would be a way to improve the ongoing momentum of this Sunday School outreach plan. This encouragement could come in two ways: feedback with accountability, and praise reports. First, the church leadership could encourage the class leadership regularly through ongoing positive feedback and accountability. Positive feedback could come through notes, e-mails, phone calls, or personal contact. Accountability provided to the class teachers and outreach point people, would encourage continual diligence and be a reminder of their roles in the outreach plan.

The second way to encourage the class leaders could be the collection and dissemination of praise reports on individual classes' successes. Each success; phone contacts made, visits completed, individuals visiting Sunday School classes through the contacts, and non-Christians coming to faith in Christ as an answer to prayer; could be a victory for all the classes to hear about and celebrate. "Praise Reports" placed in the Sunday School attendance folders could be a way to accomplish this. A staff pastor or church leader could stop by a Sunday School class to congratulate them on their level of involvement or a specific outreach success.

Improving the questionnaire to provide more information, expanding the Sunday School leadership's commitment to the shared goal of outreach, and using

encouragement to build momentum during the course of the project; would be significant methods of improving this Sunday School outreach plan.

Following the completion of the four months of the outreach implementation plan, the Adult Sunday School Teacher's Questionnaire (Appendix B) was again given to the teachers. The goal was to compare the teachers' initial answers to the pre-thesis questionnaire questions to the same questions asked at the conclusion of the four months of intentional outreach efforts. An effort was made to determine if the philosophy and practice of the teachers in the adult Sunday School classes had changed due to participation in the outreach plan. Our initial hypothesis was that one side effect of this thesis project would be a greater focus on outreach in the adult classes.

When the teachers were asked in the post-thesis questionnaire to rank, according to importance, ten items concerning their class, items related to teaching ranked most important. The two items related to fellowship were ranked fifth and ninth, inreach items ranked sixth and tenth, and outreach items ranked seventh and eighth in importance. This emphasis on teaching was seen in the fact that the teachers reported an average 38 minutes teaching, 8 minutes in fellowship, and 7 minutes in announcements and prayer requests. The average amount of time for teaching, and announcements and prayer requests remained practically the same before and after the thesis project. The amount of time for fellowship fell from an average of 13 minutes to 8 minutes.

Of the items the teachers ranked by importance, most remained the same average rank between the pre-thesis questionnaire and the post-thesis questionnaire.

Two items fell and two gained in importance. “Fellowship opportunities outside of class” fell from 7th to 9th, and “helping meet the physical or financial needs of those in class” fell from 5th to 10th. “Reaching out to those who have stopped attending our class” climbed from 9th to 6th, and “following up on class visitors and inviting them back” climbed from 10th to 7th. This shows a gain in the teachers’ recognition of outreach importance.

The teachers were again asked two questions concerning outreach; one an open-ended question and another requested they choose from a list. When asked the open-ended question concerning how their class reaches out, they most often described their efforts as inviting others. One-fourth mentioned encouraging the class members to witness or reach out to those in need. One class mentioned outreach through a court-ordered program involvement. No class mentioned prayer, routine phone contacts, or visitation on the open-ended question. From the list of class outreach activities, each marked welcoming visitors and inviting them to return. Most classes checked encouraging members to invite others, contacting by phone those who have stopped attending, and praying for the lost. Half of the classes checked calling and inviting back class visitors. Less than one-third mentioned visiting someone who had stopped attending and no classes marked a personal visit to the home of a class visitor.

From the pre-thesis to the post-thesis questionnaires, only one additional class reported encouraging class members to invite others, weekly praying for the lost, and visiting those who have stopped attending. Three categories of outreach were actually down according to the post-thesis questionnaire. Phone contacts to class

visitors, and phone contacts to those who have stopped attending, were both down one class. While there were two classes that were visiting the homes of class visitors before, there were no classes making personal visits to class visitors at the time of the post-thesis questionnaire. The answers to these questions indicate that there was no new residual outreach practices continued in most classes after the outreach implementation plan was completed. While there were gains in the teachers' theoretical understanding of the importance of outreach, it appears no significant change in practice was effected by the four months of intentional outreach efforts.

The teachers were also asked about their class goals and accomplishments. When they were asked to write the goals for their class, they most often described them as application-oriented teaching. Almost one-third mentioned reaching out to others. Similarly, when they were asked what was being accomplished in their class, most mentioned applying God's Word to the members' lives. Outreach was mentioned by one class. In answering what their class did well, they most often responded with class discussion and Bible study. Only one mentioned outreach as something their class did well.

The teachers' answers to what their class did well, what was being accomplished, and what the class goals were changed very little from before and after the thesis project. The only gain in outreach focus being that one more class mentioned outreach as a goal than before the thesis project. This indicates the slight advance in outreach as a goal, though outreach is still not something most teachers consider their class to be doing well.

The comparison and analysis of the teacher's responses indicated that teaching remained the most important in theory and practice. In most classes, fellowship followed next, then inreach, and finally outreach at the bottom of the list. While the teachers included in their general class philosophy the importance of outreach, the teachers did not express outreach through an intentional plan and focus in most classes. In their outreach efforts to those outside the class, each class mentioned welcoming and inviting visitors back; and almost all mentioned encouraging members to invite others, and praying for the lost. Only one half reported phone calls to visitors and none reported making in-home visits. The teachers who were not doing outreach before the thesis project, did not incorporate and perpetuate the outreach methodology used in the outreach implementation project. See the Adult Sunday School Teacher's Post-Thesis Questionnaire Analysis in Appendix H for a more complete description of the teachers' responses to each of the survey questions.

Cathedral of the Cross has a great deal of potential for growth in Sunday School. This potential is yet to be realized as still only a small percentage of adult attendees also come to Sunday School. The goal of this thesis project was to implement a Sunday School outreach plan that would increase Sunday School attendance through visitation, phone contacts, and prayer. This goal was not reached, though it could be argued that progress has been made in achieving the needed outreach mindset on which future outreach methods could be built. The church can celebrate the fact that 23 class members were involved in contacting 98 people by phone or personal visit. The Sunday School volunteers participating in visitation resulted in greater outreach for the visitation program, including four that prayed to

accept Christ as their Savior. Though they were few, the church can also celebrate those who were added to the Sunday School membership. An overflow of this implementation plan has been that Sunday School teachers and members have progressed in their understanding that outreach should be just as important for their class as teaching or fellowship. The lessons learned by the Sunday School teachers and leadership, the concern felt by those to whom we reached out, and the decisions made to follow Christ, brought worth to all the effort of this project.

Appendix A

January 2008 Telephone Interviews of the Eight Protestant Churches In the Immediate Community around Cathedral of the Cross Reporting 150 or More Adults in Their Sunday Morning Worship Services

Church Name	Denomination	Average # of adults in Sunday School	Average # of adults in Sunday morning service	% of Attending Adults in Sunday School
Center Point First Baptist	Southern Baptist	190	270	70%
Hilldale Baptist	Southern Baptist	119	180	66%
Huffman Baptist	Southern Baptist	400	400	100%
Huffman United Methodist	United Methodist	190	260	73%
The Refiner's House	Non-Denominational	No Sunday School	800	0%
Ridgecrest Baptist	Southern Baptist	150	213	70%
St. John United Methodist	United Methodist	100	150	67%
The Worship Center	Non-Denominational	350	1,700	21%

Church Name	Average Sunday morning service length	Paid staff member over Sunday School?	# of weekly Children's programs outside of Sunday School	Small Group ministry outside of Sun. Sch.?
Center Point 1 st Baptist	75 min.	Yes	2	No
Hilldale Baptist	90 min.	Yes	2	No
Huffman Baptist	60 min.	Yes	3	Yes
Huffman United Methodist	60 min.	No	3	Yes
The Refiner's House	98 min.	No	2	No
Ridgecrest Baptist	60 min.	No	2	Yes
St. John United Methodist	60 min.	No	3	Yes
The Worship Center	90 min.	Yes	2	Yes

Appendix B

Adult Sunday School Teacher's Questionnaire

Class Name: _____

Main Teacher: _____

Co-Teacher (if any): _____

Fill-in or Substitute Teacher: _____

In a few short sentences or phrases, please answer the following:

1) What does your class do well?

2) What is being accomplished in your class?

3) What are your goals for the class?

4) Please give a general time line for your class; for example, Fellowship Time 5 minutes, announcements and prayer requests 5minutes, teaching 40 minutes, etc..

5) If your class reaches out to those who do not currently attend church or any Sunday School class, how do you do it?

6) Please check which of the following apply to your class:

- ☐ We warmly welcome all visitors and invite them to return
- ☐ In class we weekly pray for the lost (neighbors, co-workers, friends, etc.)
- ☐ We make contact by phone with visitors to our Sunday School class
- ☐ Someone from our class personally visits the home of our class visitors
- ☐ We encourage class members to invite others to our class
- ☐ We make contact by phone with those who stopped attending our class
- ☐ Someone from our class personally visits the home of those who had stopped attending

7) Please rank the following items in order of importance to your class (1 being most important, 2 – second most important, to 10 – least important)

- ☐ Providing an opportunity for fellowship during class time
- ☐ Fellowship opportunities outside of class
- ☐ Being friendly and welcoming
- ☐ Deep study of the Word of God
- ☐ Bible study is focused on applying God's Word to everyday life
- ☐ Allowing students to ask questions and interact with the teacher's lesson
- ☐ Outreach to those who do not attend any church or Sunday School
- ☐ Helping meet the physical or financial needs of those in class
- ☐ Following up on class visitors and inviting them back
- ☐ Reaching out to those who have stopped attending our class

Appendix C

Adult Sunday School Teacher's Pre-Thesis Questionnaire Analysis

Question	Classes Responding	Response (# of classes responding)
1) What does your class do well?	13	Application oriented teaching (6) Deep Bible study (6) Class Discussion (4) Pray (4) Fellowship (3) Contact with class members (1) Reach out to community (1)
2) What is being accomplished in your class?	13	Biblical application (8) – Responses were: marriages strengthened; encouragement to testify; training; wisdom; respect leadership; overcoming insecurities; breaking patterns and reactions. Teach Biblical knowledge (5) Relationship building (2) Spiritual growth (2) Caring for each other (1) Evangelism (1) – Response was: Minister to the unsaved. Promptness (1) Raising up teachers (1) Help needy (1) Pray for families and leaders (1)
3) What are your goals for the class?	13	Spiritual growth (7) Application oriented teaching (6) Reach out to others (5) Training & discipleship (3) Fellowship (2) Biblical knowledge (1) Strengthen marriage (1) Prayer (1) Deeper teaching (1) Salvation (1)
4) Please give a general time line for your class; for example, fellowship time 5 minutes, announcements and prayer requests 5 minutes, teaching 40 minutes, etc..	13	Announcements & Prayer Requests (13) 9 classes – 5 minutes 3 classes – 10 minutes 1 class - not specified (6 min. avg.- 10% of class time)

		Teaching (13) 4 classes – 35 minutes 2 classes – 40 minutes 2 classes – 30 minutes 2 classes – not specified 1 class – 55 minutes 1 class – 45 minutes 1 class – 25 minutes (37 min. avg. - 62% of class time) Fellowship Included (10) 6 classes – 10 minutes 1 class – 30 minutes 1 class – 25 minutes 1 class – 7.5 minutes 1 class – 5 minutes (13 min. avg. - 22% of class time) Closing (3) 2 classes – 5 minutes 1 class – no specified (5 min. avg. – 8% of class time)
5) If your class reaches out to those who do not currently attend church or any Sunday School class, how do you do it?	12	Invite others (6) None (3) Secular program involvement/court order (1) Specific required usher training (1) Prayer (1) Financial help or meals (1) Fellowship (1)
6) Please check which of the following apply to your class:	13	We warmly welcome all visitors and invite them to return (13) We encourage class members to invite others to our class (11) We make contact by phone with those who have stopped attending our class (10) In class we weekly pray for the lost -neighbors, co-workers, friends (10) We make contact by phone with visitors to our Sunday School class (7) Someone from our class personally visits the home of those who have stopped attending (3) Someone from our class personally visits the home of our class visitors (2)

<p>7) Please rank the following items in order of importance to your class (1 being most important, 2 – second most important, to 10 – least important).</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>Bible study is focused on applying God's Word to everyday life 8 – 1st place 5 – 2nd place (1st place overall)</p> <p>Deep study of the Word of God 8 – 1st place 4 – 2nd place 1 – 5th place (2nd place overall)</p> <p>Allowing students to ask questions and interact with the teacher's lesson 5 – 3rd place 3 – 1st place 2 – 2nd place 1 – 4th place 1 – 5th place 1 – 8th place (3rd place overall)</p> <p>Being friendly and welcoming 3 – 1st place 3 – 4th place 2 – 2nd place 2 – 6th place 1 – 3rd place 1 – 7th place 1 – 9th place (4th place overall)</p> <p>Helping meet the physical or financial needs of those in class 3 – 2nd place 2 – 4th place 2 – 6th place 1 – 1st place 1 – 3rd place 1 – 8th place 1 – 9th place 1 – 10th place (5th place overall)</p> <p>Providing an opportunity for fellowship during class time; 3 – 2nd place 2 – 4th place 2 – 5th place 2 – 6th place</p>
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		1 – 1 st place 1 – 7 th place 1 – 8 th place (6 th place overall) Fellowship opportunities outside of class 3 – 2 nd place 2 – 3 rd place 2 – 4 th place 2 – 6 th place 2 – 10 th place 1 – 5 th place 1 – 8 th place (7 th place overall) Outreach to those who do not attend any church or Sunday School 3 – 2 nd place 2 – 7 th place 2 – 10 th place 1 – 3 rd place 1 – 4 th place 1 – 5 th place 1 – 6 th place 1 – 8 th place (8 th place overall) Reaching out to those who have stopped attending our class 3 – 3 rd place 2 – 2 nd place 2 – 4 th place 2 – 9 th place 1 – 5 th place 1 – 6 th place 1 – 7 th place 1 – 8 th place (9 th place overall) Following up on class visitors and inviting them back 4 – 4 th place 2 – 2 nd place 2 – 3 rd place 2 – 9 th place 1 – 6 th place 1 – 7 th place 1 – 10 th place (10 th place overall)
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Appendix D

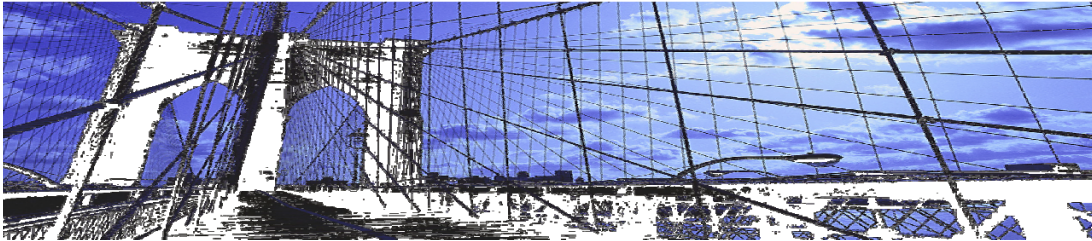
Phone Contact Report

Welcome to Cathedral of the Cross

Name: <u>JOHN DOE</u>	Date <u>3 / 25 / 07</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM
Spouse's Name: <u>SUSAN DOE</u>	Phone: <u>(205) 854-7777</u>
Address: <u>1480 CENTER POINT PARKWAY</u>	
City: <u>BIRMINGHAM</u> State: <u>AL</u> Zip: <u>35215</u>	
Church Affiliation: <u>FIRST CHURCH</u>	Do you attend regularly: <u>NO</u>
Guest Of: <u>MARY SMITH</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Single
	<input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed
Children: <u>JOHNNY DOE</u> Age: <u>2</u>	
	Age: _____
Others attending with you: <u>SUSAN DOE</u>	

Age	Check One
12 Yrs & under	<input type="checkbox"/>
12-15 yrs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
16-20 yrs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
21-35 yrs.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
36-40 yrs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
41-65 yrs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over 65 yrs.	<input type="checkbox"/>

BridgeBuilders



Phone Contact Report

CLASS NAME: _____

YOUR NAME & NUMBER: _____

PHONE CALLS:

We attempt to reach each visitor three times. Second and third calls are only necessary if you do not reach them with the first call.

1st Call Results and Date:

2nd Call (if needed) Results and Date:

3rd Call (if needed) Results and Date:

* Please return to your Sunday School class attendance folder or to the church office.

Appendix E

Phone Contact Suggestions

BridgeBuilders



Phone Contact Suggestions

Before...

1. Pray that God will use the phone call for His glory.
2. Please familiarize yourself with all the information on the above church visitor's card.

During...

1. First introduce yourself and let the visitor know you are calling from Cathedral.
2. Thank them for visiting the church and ask how they enjoyed the service.
3. If they do not have a church affiliation listed on the visitor's card, ask if they have a local church they actively attend. If they do not have a church home, encourage them to return.
4. Introduce your Sunday School class to them and offer to meet them at the church Sunday before Sunday School so they will have someone they have met to walk into class with. A meeting place like the fountain in the front foyer is easy for a visitor to find.
5. If they seem receptive, ask if they have received Christ as their personal Savior (do not assume they have). If they have not, ask them if they would like to receive Him now through prayer over the phone. See the sample sinner's prayer below.
6. If they begin to tell you their personal problems, sincerely offer to pray for them. Encourage them to contact the church office for any counseling needs.
7. If they have complaints or requests of the church, encourage them to call the office.
8. End the conversation in a positive manner; thanking them for their time, thanking them for visiting the church, mentioning that you are looking forward to meeting them Sunday, etc.

After...

Fill out the Phone Contact Report. Make sure to record the date for each call along with the results (how the call went, or not home, no answer, line busy, disconnected, etc.)

Avoid:

1. Please avoid eating or chewing gum while talking on the phone.
2. Please do not participate in a discussion that puts down any pastors or churches.
3. Do not underestimate what God can accomplish through a single phone call!

If you have any questions, please feel free to call the Outreach Office.

Sample Sinner's Prayer:

"Lord, I know that I have broken your laws and my sins have separated me from you. I want to turn away from my past sinful life toward you. Forgive me of my sin. I believe that your son, Jesus Christ, died for my sins, was resurrected from the dead, and is alive. I ask you into my heart and life today. I invite you to become the Lord of my life so I can serve you for the rest of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen."

Bridgebuilders Informational Handout

Bridgebuilders

Building a Bridge for Church Visitors

As a Bridgebuilder...

- You will represent your Sunday School Class at Monday night visitation on your appointed week. Visitation is from 7 to 8:30pm and we begin in the Fellowship Hall upstairs (near the Youth and Children's Auditorium).
- You will join a visitation team of trained witnesses. No training or experience of any kind is needed. There is nothing to memorize and no materials are needed.
- You will not need a tie or dress. Come as you are.
- Your visitation team will be visiting in homes of church visitors. Specifically, you will visit those who would be a good fit for your class.
- While you are welcome to participate in the visit as much as you would like, you will only be responsible for introducing your class and inviting that church visitor to join the following Sunday. While they might not come to your class alone, they will be much more likely to attend if they have already met someone in the class. They can, for example, meet you at 9:15am at the fountain in the front foyer and then join you for Sunday School.
- You will see your class grow and see God at work in people's lives in exciting ways!

Thank you for your contribution to your Sunday School class and your desire to build the Kingdom of God!

Bridgebuilders Leadership Handout for Teachers

Bridgebuilders
Leadership

The Sunday School Teacher...

- Conducts an election for, or recruits and appoints, a “point person” who will work with the Outreach Office;
- Announces the monthly sign-up for the needed Bridgebuilders; and
- Makes sure the lost are prayed for in some way in every class.

The Point Person...

- Will enlist individuals to sign-up on the Bridgebuilders calendar,
- Make sure the monthly calendar is turned into the Outreach Office or placed in the Sunday School class attendance folder before the first Monday of every month,
- Remind those who have signed up for visitation the Sunday before they are to participate, and
- Find a substitute if someone has to cancel and inform the Outreach Office of the changes.
- They also are to take the church visitor’s information placed by the Outreach Office in the Sunday School folder, and distribute it to phone contact volunteers along with the phone contact report and phone ministry suggestions handout.
- They make sure these phone ministry reports get filled out properly and returned to the Sunday School folder in a timely manner.

Appendix H

Adult Sunday School Teacher's Post-Thesis Questionnaire Analysis

Question	Classes Responding	Response (# of classes with response)
1) What does your class do well?	13	Class Discussion (5) Bible study (5) Application oriented teaching (3) Pray for others (2) Contact with class members (2) Fellowship (1) Reach out to community (1) Contact with past members (1) Unity (1) Discipleship (1) Accountability (1) Listen (1)
2) What is being accomplished in your class?	13	Biblical application (8) – Responses were: getting God's perspective on life, seeing our spiritual heritage through God's Word, seeking Godly wisdom, witness training, living out Christianity, training to serve, building marriages, and breaking destructive patterns. Teach Biblical knowledge (4) Relationship building (3) Spiritual growth (2) Involvement in class discussion (2) Pray for and respect leadership (1) Teacher as a source of pastoral care (1)
3) What are your goals for the class?	12	Application oriented teaching (5) Reach out to others (4) Spiritual growth (3) Biblical knowledge (2) Getting new members (2) Training and discipleship (1) Strengthen marriage (1) Prayer (1) Serve the church (1) Interactive (1) Build relationships (1)

4) Please give a general time line for your class; for example, fellowship time 5 minutes, announcements and prayer requests 5 minutes, teaching 40 Minutes, etc..	13	Announcements & Prayer Requests (13) 9 classes – 5 minutes 4 classes – 10 minutes (7 min. avg.- 12% of class time) Teaching (13) 5 classes – 35 minutes 4 classes – 40 minutes 2 classes – 30 minutes 1 class – 60 minutes 1 class – 45 minutes (38 min. avg. - 63% of class time) Fellowship Included (11) 6 classes – 10 minutes 5 class – 5 minutes (8 min. avg. - 13% of class time) Closing (2) 2 classes – 10 minutes (10 min. avg. – 17% of class time)
5) If your class reaches out to those who do not currently attend church or any Sunday School class, how do you do it?	13	Invite others (10) Encourage class to witness (2) None (1) Encourage the class to minister to the physical and emotional needs of those outside the class (1) Secular program involvement/court order (1) Specific required usher training (1)
6) Please check which of the following apply to your class:	13	We warmly welcome all visitors and invite them to return (13) We encourage class members to invite others to our class (12) In class we weekly pray for the lost -neighbors, co-workers, friends (11) We make contact by phone with those who have stopped attending our class (9) We make contact by phone with visitors to our Sunday School class (6) Someone from our class personally visits the home of those who have stopped attending (4) Someone from our class personally visits the home of our class visitors (0)

<p>7) Please rank the following items in order of importance to your class (1 being most important, 2 – second most important, to 10 – least important).</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>Bible study is focused on applying God's Word to everyday life 7 – 1st place 5 – 2nd place 1 – 4th place (1st place overall)</p> <p>Deep study of the Word of God 4 – 1st place 3 – 2nd place 3 – 3rd place 1 – 4th place 1 – 8th place 1 – 9th place (2nd place overall)</p> <p>Allowing students to ask questions and interact with the teacher's lesson 6 – 3rd place 5 – 2nd place 1 – 1st place 1 – 8th place (3rd place overall)</p> <p>Being friendly and welcoming 6 – 4th place 2 – 3rd place 2 – 5th place 1 – 6th place 1 – 7th place 1 – 9th place (4th place overall)</p> <p>Providing an opportunity for fellowship during class time; 5 – 5th place 3 – 4th place 2 – 8th place 1 – 3rd place 1 – 6th place 1 – 7th place (5th place overall)</p> <p>Reaching out to those who have stopped attending our class 5 – 7th place 2 – 5th place 2 – 10th place 1 – 3rd place 1 – 6th place</p>
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		<p>1 – 8th place 1 – 9th place (6th place overall)</p> <p>Following up on class visitors and inviting them back</p> <p>4 – 6th place 4 – 9th place 3 – 8th place 2 – 4th place (7th place overall)</p> <p>Outreach to those who do not attend any church or Sunday School</p> <p>4 – 7th place 3 – 9th place 3 – 10th place 2 – 5th place 1 – 1st place (8th place overall)</p> <p>Fellowship opportunities outside of class</p> <p>4 – 10th place 3 – 6th place 3 – 8th place 2 – 5th place 1 – 9th place (9th place overall)</p> <p>Helping meet the physical or financial needs of those in class</p> <p>4 – 10th place 3 – 6th place 2 – 7th place 2 – 8th place 2 – 9th place (10th place overall)</p>
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